DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

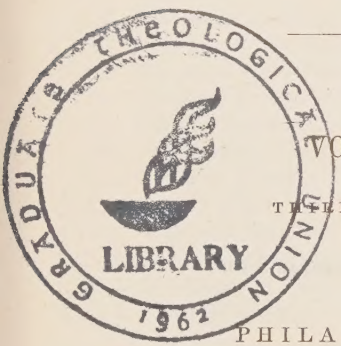
BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט':

"BEHOLD! THUS IS MY WORD, SAITH THE LORD, LIKE THE FIRE, AND LIKE THE HAMMER THAT SHIVERETH THE ROCK."

Jeremiah xxiii. 29.



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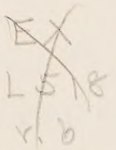

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DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

FEAR OF GOD AND MAN.

How holy art Thou, O God! how pure is thy being! how immaculate thy perfection! The heavens declare thy exalted glory, and the earth responds to the theme; and wherever we are, whithersoever we move, we are met by the evidence of thy presence, by the almost tangible manifestation of the proof that we are before Thee. In our sorrows therefore we are consoled with the assurance that Thou art near to listen to our sighs, to behold our every suffering; and when the world allures us unto sin, the consciousness that thy eye is upon us will withhold us from transgressing thy precepts. O! that we may thus feel Thee forever, know Thee in our hearts at all times, have Thee present before our eyes continually, that we may follow thy light and humbly walk where thy glory leads. For thus would we be perfect Israelites, servants after

thy own heart, children of salvation through faith and obedience. But how often are we heedless! how often are our eyes averted! how often are our ears closed, that we see not Thee in our midst. That we hear not thy voice which counsels us to hasten unto wisdom's paths. Yet, though thus erring, we feel assured that Thou wilt not reject us without warning, that Thou wilt wait for our return, and give us incentives to a renewed righteousness. Let us then be made conscious that we have transgressed, cause thy light to blaze up before us, as it did before our fathers on the great day at Horeb: so that sinners may be called to repentance, and transgressors feel the shame of their guiltiness; in order that thy Name may be glorified, and salvation increase unto the ends of the earth from generation to generation. Amen.

BRETHREN!

The Talmud contains the following anecdote: Rabbi Jochanan son of Zakkai was ill, when his scholars came to visit him. Seeing the end of their revered teacher approaching, they said to him, "Rabbi, bless us!" and he said thereupon, "May the fear of Heaven be upon you as the fear of flesh and blood." Surprised at what they thought the singularity of the dying injunction of one so renowned as their master, they asked him, "And is this all?" "Would to God," replied the sage, "that this might be so; for when one is going to sin, he looks about him, for fear that some man might see him; and if then you have the fear of God upon you as the fear of flesh and blood, you will ever reflect that the Lord's eye is upon you, and you will be saved from transgression."

The moral lesson conveyed to us in this simple relique of antiquity is so beautiful and self-evident, that it is almost impossible to add anything to it by way of illustration; it is a sermon in itself, and finds a response in every heart. We fear the eye of man when we are about to disgrace ourselves by any act unworthy of ourselves, unbecoming to our station; for we cannot bear to meet the reproaches of those who are like ourselves mortal and vanishing, and we omit therefore to do what our passions counselled us to do, for fear of the opprobrium which the world attaches to sin. And good is this restraint. Whilst we feel that the opinion of those whom we love, or who demand our esteem, is something to which we attach a high value, whilst we estimate it sufficiently high to deem it of importance to our happiness: we to a surety will not throw it idly away, by inconsiderate and hasty conduct. If a man should be impressed with the idea that the beloved of his heart would reject his suit, were he to appear in her presence in a state of beastly intoxication, his madness, displayed in a love for inebriating drink, must rise to a high state of uncontrolled violence before he could venture to disgust her with the proof of his hopeless yielding to the excitement of the wine-cup.—If I want to obtain the favour of a man in power, and I know that he hates falsehood and calumny, I would to a certainty not approach him with a deliberate libel upon a member of his household, when my wickedness would be at once exposed.—If a ruffian is going to lift up his hand against the peace of his neighbour, he watches narrowly every avenue, in dread lest some one might approach to be a witness to his nefarious

act, by which due punishment would follow the deed with which his callous mind is filled.

Let it not then be supposed that the fear of man is a trait which we should discard from our soul, on the contrary, it is a wholesome principle which checks many an evil, which prevents many a crime. And how beautiful a token has the Lord given us, which is inherent in our physical organization, which is not absent from him who has not lost all thoughts of self-esteem, and who is not yet dead to every noble aspiration. It is the outward symbol of shame, of which I am speaking, it is the mantle of red which mounts on the cheek of the person of feeling whenever anything unbecoming the dignity of man is laid to his charge. No one who is yet alive to the difference between a good and a bad deed, but must feel the blood rushing upward to his countenance, when he is discovered in any act which has the smallest admixture of evil in its composition; and whilst this slight confusion is a mark of guiltiness in some respects, it is in others a sure, a much surer token, that he who feels shame is yet good at heart, that he displays ample evidence that he values virtue far more than the sin into which he has been betrayed. But let a person's effrontery once be so great that he can hear himself accused without blushing, let him be able to bear the taunts and reproofs of his fellow-men with indifference: and you may be certain that he is a slave to vice, one grown old in iniquity, although but few years have passed over his head, and his hair be untinged with the frost of age. It may be embarrassing to a man of the world to have the tell-tale shamefacedness, which sends the blush unto his face when-

ever any especial allusion is made to his foibles or the foibles of others of which he knows himself or the others guilty; so also may the female who mingles in the elegant world feel it extremely awkward that her modesty, though shocked but in a slight degree, will prove itself offended in a manner not to be mistaken, even without her wishing to display any emotion; but let them be assured, that it is a wholesome sentiment which causes this embarrassment, it is the sentiment of innate feeling which understands, so to say at a glance, what is right and what is wrong, which will make itself felt, and is thus the best guardian against violent transgression. But let a female, especially, once learn to dispense with this sentiment; let her have succeeded in being able to hear allusions to improper subjects unmoved; let her be able to join unconcerned in ribald conversation: and she is hastening to a state, where modesty is little better than a mockery, and virtue a thing perhaps in name whilst its essence is long since evaporated.—You may say probably that, in thus experiencing the emotion of shame before the world, it is only the feeling of being detected in what men call improprieties, which produces the outward token of shame; be it so, assume the utmost, that it is nothing but mortified pride in being discovered worse than one wishes to appear, or to be guilty of the same foibles which others in inferior stations or of less endowment might possess without an equally great share of blame: still, whilst a man is afraid of lowering himself in the estimation of others, whilst in brief he can blush when accused, right or wrong, of any act in the least disgraceful, he will have a mass of incentives to preserve

him erect, which those who are indifferent to praise or blame have not, cannot have.

But in listening to this admonition, that is, in being careful how we incur shame, there is one consideration which the Rabbi Jochanan gave to his scholars: "O that the fear of Heaven might be upon you as the fear of flesh and blood." Progress or retrogression, as at times it may be called, of civilization introduces customs or opinions which make certain acts or omissions disgraceful, which, in themselves, are far from being so. But a diseased state of public opinion sanctions something or demands another, which in the strict code of Jewish morals is quite in opposition to the law. There have been times when drunkenness, or excess of drinking at least, was a fashionable vice; men of high distinction in the state, whose voice was listened to with breathless attention in the Senate, or whose word of command led armies to battle, were slaves to intoxication, and unblushingly they exhibited their acquired infirmity before the public eye. The general opinion required them not to blush for their sin, and the fear of God did not rest upon them with that crushing weight that it could arrest them in the path of transgression.—Or not to go back to times which have past, let us rest awhile upon scenes of which we frequently hear, in which, to the disgrace of Israelites, some of our own brothers have been conspicuous actors, as though they had not the fear of Heaven before them. I speak of the practice of single combat for words spoken which the world construes as a mortal insult. Let us imagine, for example, two young men engaged in seeking the same object, say they are endeavour-

ing to obtain the favour of the same woman, or to reach the same political eminence, which competition often produces mutual ill-will. Now to murder one the other in cold blood would bring the offender to an ignominious end; he would be considered to have a brother's blood upon his garments, and the gallows would terminate his guilty career. But civilization has discovered a means by which he can remove a rival, I will admit with some risk to himself; but still with this risk he can do so. The simple method is, that he meet him in the presence of others, and employ some insulting language, which the other must hear and understand as applied to himself; in other words, he affixes to his enemy a public mark of disgrace, as the world understands it; straightways he expects to be defied by the other to mortal combat, or else the offended would be considered a coward, a poltroon, with whom no respectable man can associate; public opinion demands that he must challenge and fight his reviler, or be branded as a worthless knave forever after. The defiance is given, and incontinently accepted; foes to God and man are appealed to to act as the friends to the parties, such friends these, as the butcher is to the lamb which he leads to slaughter; the arrangements for mutual destruction are made with the same calculation and cold deliberating with which one prepares himself for a journey. And now behold the two victims of a false code of honour and morals placed opposite to each other, passively, absolutely passive in the hands of their murderous friends, the weapons of death are put within their tremulous grasp, and after due caution, the word to inflict death is given;

the mortal bullet speeds on its errand, and the offended challenger lies a bleeding corpse upon the field, and the tide of life, welling forth from his perforated heart, tinges with red the greensward, unconscious of the crime which defiles its beauty. Does the law take cognizance of the deed? Perhaps there may be a mockery of justice, an arrest, an examination, a trial, because it is decent to inquire how a fellow-man met his untimely end, but an acquittal is almost the sure result; public opinion does hold it right to insult a man and then kill him, provided he has an equal chance of committing murder; and when the murderer goes forth again unwhipped of a blind and powerless justice, blind because hoodwinked by vulgar prejudice, and powerless because bereft of her sword by a false public opinion, he claims almost as a reward for his bravery in the duello the hand of the fair maiden whose charms first inspired him with the murderous intent, and she accepts the man stained with the blood of one who deeply, fondly, loved her, and she disdains not to acknowledge her allegiance to a malefactor against the Decalogue before the whole world. Or was the cause of the legal murder the love of power or the desire for office, the way lies clear before him, his rival is gone, and he may now advance unobstructed; he is a brave, a dangerous man, he can hate, he can insult, he can demand to be called out to battle, and he can slay, because he has a practised hand and a steady eye, and the law of public opinion says he has committed no crime.—Or take another example, where the guilty motive is less apparent: two friends, as the world terms those having intercourse in business, in pleasures, or even in sin,

have a misunderstanding over their wine-cups, or over the gaming-table, or become excited by a difference in political sentiments, or by espousing different sides of a question, and words offensive to each other pass whilst labouring as we may freely term it under a partial aberration of mind (for is not every undue excitement a species of madness?) which, were there not some code which some deem paramount to all laws, would never be worth heeding a moment after they are uttered. But before consciousness has well returned to the mind, one of those who delight in carnage waits upon the offender with a demand for an explanation of his insult, of which he scarcely remembers the import. Honour will not let him make an apology at once, lest his courage should be doubted; he must accept the challenge and fight either with the shining sword or the deadly firelock; he obeys the summons of the modern Molech, and soon becomes a victim to the assault of one, who in very truth loves him, who henceforth would sacrifice gladly his own life could he restore the murdered friend, could he reanimate the bloody clay that lies stiff and ghastly before him; and he, urged by the sting of consciousness, leaves his father's house, flies from himself over land and sea, and falls prematurely a victim to the consciousness, that he dreaded the world more than he feared his God.—Are the above not true pictures of life, of life in the great world, among men who arrogate to themselves an especial claim to respectability, to honour, and the finer feelings which ennoble the nature of man? But if you descend, to use again a word which the world applies in the sense I am now employing it, to the lower or-

ders of society, you may not perhaps find murder demanded, or when committed excused and applauded: still you will discover that they have their peculiar notions of shame and honour which can be as little defended as those which I have just exposed, and that it is very often the familiarizing themselves with certain habits of thought and action which removes their odiousness, and causes them to be looked upon with favour and approbation. Examples could be easily furnished; but it would lead us too far to institute so extensive an inquiry, which would necessarily exceed greatly the limits of a religious discourse.

Enough we have shown that there is a true and a false fear of the opinion of the world, the one which restrains us from sin, it being the exponent of the word of God as revealed to us in the law; the other which causes us to listen to the senseless laws of barbarism, or to a misconception of our duties, and thus militates against our own peace and the good of society at large; for whatever is opposed, in good truth, to our own happiness cannot be beneficial to the welfare of others; because though each man is bound to make sacrifices to the public good, he is not bound to sacrifice himself to any idea which a part of the community may by any chance whatever succeed in making for a time valid, as a species of code by which men must be governed.—It is therefore requisite that we in the outset learn to distinguish when to regard the fear of man as wholesome, and when to shun it as the author of evil and sorrow to ourselves and others. In this point as in every other the law of God as revealed from Sinai, and as we have received

it from our fathers must be our guide. No Israelite has a right to appeal for a justification of his transgression to the customs and opinions of the country in which he lives; they are nothing to him in his religious capacity; he is, it is true, bound in the amplest sense of the words to be a good citizen or a faithful subject to the powers that be; he must strictly conform to the laws of the land, pay his taxes cheerfully, and aid his fellow-citizens in their struggles for their rights with his means, his counsel, and the strength of his arm; but having performed his civil duties, his religion claims him all her own, she must be his guide, his monitor, his sole adviser. What are to him the silly notions of chivalry which prompt a man to prove himself courageous by aiming at the life of another, or putting up as a stake at play his own life to the knife or firelock of an opponent, no matter how honourable he may be? What are to him the equally foolish ideas which demand of him as a proof of manhood that he can drink largely without showing signs of drunkenness? You may say, "We live in society, and are bound to conform to the customs which are prevalent around us." I will concede the full weight of the objection; at the same time it is incumbent on a Jewish moralist to say, that society is as much as we are amenable to the moral laws of the Mosaic code; for gentile teachers admit this in the fullest manner. We are therefore not conforming to the opinions of the good sense of the nations among whom we live, but to the ideas which the good of all classes aver to be opposed to the best interests of mankind, when we yield to barbarous customs. Now if duelling should even be demanded by a code of honour which is no-

where found written down in the books of any legislator, and that the forfeit should be the expulsion as a coward from the association of those who obey this bloody behest of an unknown though often felt power: it amounts to nothing more than a declaration that, for having true courage in refusing to be guilty of or to be a party to a mortal sin, you have been banished from the society of those whom your own wise laws term the ungodly; and what loss is that to you? Perhaps you will have to stay at home, an outcast from the fashionable world, a recluse amidst a crowd, shunned as one affected with the plague by former valued associates; you see, I put down the worst consequences as the result of your refusal to fight: still what have you lost at last? is your peace of mind destroyed? have you aught to accuse yourself of? are you a criminal in your own conscience? an outcast from the favour of God? Now, on the other hand, suppose you yield to the presumed necessity; you have offended willingly or unwillingly an enemy or a friend; you refuse to apologize to prove that you will fight; you go out, after accepting the challenge, and give the usual satisfaction to your opponent, that is you allow him to aim at your heart for the privilege of doing the like to him; now one of two things must happen, either both of you escape unwounded, or one or both are disfigured for life, grievously wounded, or killed. In the first instance, you appear small indeed, even in your own estimation; you have aimed to inflict a deadly wound on each other as necessary to wipe away a stain from your honour, and then make a mutual explanation which could just as well have been done, before you endeavoured to inflict a mutual

bodily harm. But if you are wounded for life, or your friendly opponent is so in the second instance, you will bear the mark of your wickedness with you to your grave, no matter how much the seconds or your out-door friends may applaud your courage. Or if you kill your man, how can you ever have peace? will not his gory spectre arise before you nightly when you endeavour to court sleep on your restless pillow? will not the words "murderer of a brother" ring in your ears morning, noon, and night? will you not, like Cain, be a fugitive on the face of the earth in spirit at least, though your courage will teach you to stay in your native place? Or at last suppose that you yourself fall: have you a right to load voluntarily with blood-guiltiness a brother's conscience? have you a right to trifle away your own life? have you a right to render your mother childless? your sister dependent upon the cold world? your wife a widow? your children orphans? And all—because society would spurn you, if you in their acceptation are a coward! Coward you are, if you yield; for the slander, should even one have been published against you, is not disproved by your killing or wounding the calumniator, or by being killed and wounded by him; the stigma of an evil-doer will not be wiped out by such a folly. Live! live! and let your future life be the best refutation of the baseness of the calumny which your enemy from forethought or your friend from thoughtlessness may have spread abroad against you! Live! as an Israelite should live, at home, alone if need be, fearing God; shunning the society of the ungodly. What need is there that you should be loved by

those whose praise is censure, and whose censure is the best praise which they can bestow? "But they are our associates, they will leave a void in our circle; and when they quit our society, many others will leave us also; we have a position to fill in the world; our connexions demand it, that we should not disgrace them by our pusillanimous behaviour." Such perhaps are your final objections after acknowledging the justness of our strictures; no doubt you will be able to help yourselves out farther by little scraps of poetry and romance, you may perhaps think that even women will exclaim against your cowardice. Still what does this all add to the strength of the first argument, that the tone of society asks a *crime* of you? It is only an amplification thereof; and if you feel, as you should do, as Israelites, that single combat is religiously and morally wrong, none of the consequences, which you may be taught to dread as likely to arise from the withdrawal of that society's countenance, could be any reason for violating the commands of your God. No one will deny that elegant men, highly educated women, are as companions, if they are virtuous and kindhearted, the greatest charm of our existence; but like every thing else they may be purchased at too dear a price; and this state of the case arises so soon as the least departure from virtue must be paid for the acquisition of their favour. If then they demand that for any insult you should expose yourselves to commit murder or suffer it from another, or that you should enter upon practices of self-indulgence which are hurtful to your health or opposed to your ideas of propriety, for instance to become a wine-bibber, a profane swearer, a debauchee,

a gambler, or whatever the madness of the times may for the moment deem requisite: you should abandon such society, and quit it as you avoid a contagious disorder. The struggle, to part with what costs you perhaps a great deal of manœuvring and anxiety to obtain, may be severe and both annoying and painful; but you would to a certainty part with a poisonous serpent, though in your ignorance of its hurtful nature you might have spent much time and means to domesticate it with you. We may sum up the whole of what we have advanced on this head in a few words. Wrong is wrong, no matter what the world may call it; and there is sin in transgressing, if even the whole human race should by a perversity of intellect applaud the malefactor.

But besides the fashionable crimes, which are done because the world tolerates them, though the moralists of all nations unite in their condemnation, there are other deeds which are condemned by Israel's law alone, and the prohibitions against which are simply peculiar restrictions laid upon us, in contradistinction to the gentiles. With them therefore it cannot now be said that there is any disgrace connected with their transgression; since public opinion is not at present, under the best aspect of the case, based upon our religious ideas. We must therefore have a stronger incentive to resist them than those actions which are condemned by the good of all nations. This motive is the shame which we must feel when confronted by our Supreme Judge, at the time when he will visit all spirits, and adjudge them to reward or punishment as their own deeds may plead for or accuse them. How will the son of the earth appear before his

Father, when he has left his laws contemned, his commandments disobeyed? what plea is he to enter, what excuse can he make, when he is once convicted by his own acts of disloyalty to his God and King? And what atonement can he offer, save it be obedience and repentance? Thus only can he come, his soul freed from taint, his conscience unburdened with iniquity. It was to influence us with this conviction of the impossibility of escaping the divine vengeance, that the Lord appeared in his awful glory in the presence of our ancestors on Mount Sinai. They beheld the great fire, they felt the mountain quake, they heard the loud voice of the cornet, but saw no similitude, or figure. Still they heard the words proceeding distinctly, in a manner unapproachable by human organs, from the midst of the great fire, commanding them to be holy in the manner the wisdom of their heavenly Father had prescribed to them. They were told to obey laws which other men knew not of, of which no nation had ever heard before; and when the awful announcement was over, though they had remained unscathed in the midst of all the glory, they dreaded to approach again the holy mount where God was, for fear that they should die. They therefore appealed to Moses that he should step forward and hear himself the commandments, to communicate them afterwards to his brothers. But the prophet in consenting by divine authority to be the mediator between God and Israel, was still aware of the purpose of the Most High, that it was not to destroy but to instruct that He had come. He spoke therefore to the people:

אל תיראו כי לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלהים
ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם לבלתי תחטאו:
שמות כ' יז':

"Fear not; for in order to prove you did God come, and for the sake that his fear might be before your faces, that you sin not." Exodus xx. 17.

On Horeb God appeared to test our hearts, whether we were willing to observe his precepts. And there He displayed his power, so that we might understand how great, how exalted, how powerful He is, that we might feel a wholesome fear of incurring the resentment and vengeance which appertain to sin. If man now is conscious, whenever an opportunity for transgression offers itself, that his God is present; if he is convinced that though no human eyes see and condemn him, that though no human shame attaches itself to his conduct, he cannot escape the cognizance and shame of the Lord: he will surely hesitate at his intended acts, tremble before the august Judge, and sin not. There will arise before his mind the hour of judgment with his iniquity upon his soul; before him he will behold the glory far more dazzling and terrible than shone at Sinai; and he will call up the power of the offended Judge if he be found delinquent, and, on the other hand, the consciousness of a virtuous life and the approbation of his Father, if he be adjudged innocent. Thus feeling, how can the Israelite sin? thus acting, what has he to fear? he has obeyed his God, he has walked in his paths; he has been faithful, he has been afraid to sully himself with transgression, and he is accepted, because this

is the reward which the Bible promises to those who have walked in the path of life.

You will thus see, brethren, how wise was the prayer of the dying Rabbi with which he blessed his disciples; how wholesome it would be, were we to dread offending God as much as we tremble to incur the shame of man, who is here to-day and to-morrow in his grave. At the same time, let us reflect, that all the feelings of honour which are implanted in us are not evil in themselves, and become only so when they are allowed to militate against the wisdom of God. But when we combine a decent deference to the opinion of the world in indifferent matters, with a thorough fear of God and an entire yielding to his guidance in all things, we cannot easily go astray; but acceptable to man, pleasing to God, we will follow the road marked out for us in the law, which will surely and truly lead us into the presence of the approving Father, not then the awful Judge, who will grant us his blessing, because that we obeyed his will. Amen.

Shebat 23d. } 5605.
Jan'y 31st. }

DISCOURSE II.

THE TRANSGRESSION AT HOREB.

Israel's God and King! listen to our prayer, Thou who hast ever been attentive to the cry of the suppliant who asked thy aid, or craved thy forgiveness. From the very birth of our nation we have rebelled against thy will, and when yet thy glory shone before our eyes like a consuming fire on Mount Sinai, we made unto us a molten image, and worshipped the senseless work of our hands, as though we had not been instructed. But even then thy mercy overcame thy wrath, and Thou listenedst to the voice of thy chosen prophet, and Thou destroyedst not the guilty race that had thrown off thy worship. And whenever in later times we had courted by our misdeeds thy visitation, the wrath was but sparingly poured forth, and a remnant always escaped to rise again and bless thy Name. It is thus we have felt thy power; in this wise have we been taught thy mercy and loving kindness. O! that this truth might fill the hearts of all, that they might feel deeply that Thou, O God of Israel! art all in all, the Father, the Judge, the Saviour; that all of our seed might thus subdue their every wish to thy behests, feel Thee in all their thoughts, know Thee in all their joys, invoke Thee in all their sorrows, in order that they might become in very truth thy people, children of Israel, who are a joy to themselves, a light to the gentiles, a blessed seed who

arise and glorify their Father. Let us then be made sensible, O our God! that thy spirit is among us, that thy grace is our support, that thy forgiveness has wiped out our guilt; and in this we shall know that thy presence is with us, even as it was from Egypt unto this day, and that we are still thy own treasure, the worthy offspring of Abraham thy beloved. Amen.

Brethren!

If we survey the history of our people, and endeavour to trace therefrom the rules of our life and the doctrine we should believe in, we cannot be far wrong in supposing that in this study we shall discover the true principles of religion, which it behoves us to impress indelibly on our spirits. The history of Israel is in very truth the history of Providence as displayed in his acts towards man, and the results we read of confirm the announcement of the divine rule made on the day of the promulgation of the Decalogue, that it is virtue alone which can render man happy, and that through vice he invariably travels the road of destruction, which, though once in a while appearing to lead through flowery parterres, or seemingly surrounded with cooling shades, is sure to prove ultimately to the deluded traveller, that nothing but evil betides him if he allows the dangerous and false lures to tempt him to venture upon these flowery parterres and cooling shades, which invite him to enter to seek their fragrance or to enjoy their shelter. We cannot say, that the history of Israel presents many points on which we can dwell with satisfaction; but little glory is recorded there; but few tokens of national greatness are presented to our

self-congratulation; for but seldom can we say that our fathers were true to themselves and the religion which they had received. We had a country, but we lost it through our dissensions; we had a religion, but we despised it through the perversity of our rebellious hearts; we had a gracious King, but we offended Him by our foolish devotion to idols and heathen practices. It is therefore not from self-love that we can study our history; on the contrary, it is with pain and humiliation alone that we can sit down to this task, to peruse the portion of our records referring to the period before the destruction of the first temple; and after that it will be a heartfelt anguish at the innumerable sorrows which overwhelmed us, as the unhappy bark tossed by the storm on a rocky beach is flooded by every wave, which sweeps over the boiling floods and exhausts its rage upon the helpless wreck which has been surrendered to its fury. Still there are instruction and hope springing from the perusal of the historical parts of Scripture; instruction, inasmuch as the sacred pages strip man of the false glare which outward circumstances often throw around him, and exhibit him to himself, as he is, rebellious, froward, and vain; and hope, because we trace in every transaction the good Providence which allows not an act to pass or a word to be spoken, but directs it to the ultimate good of mankind at large; and we are thus led to look for a triumphant issue of the fate of our people, by means of the long journey through sorrow and anguish which they had to travel in the progress of the human race to its ultimate destiny, whatever this may be.

It is for this reason that we, as believers, do not

dread the ridicule which those unfriendly to religion cast upon the records of Scripture, because the people to whom the law was given, and who, if any, ought to have been thoroughly imbued with its spirit, have so signally failed to prove themselves worthy of the high calling which the Bible assigns to them. We are told, that from our very birth we were rebellious, and that at no period of our history were we ever in such a position, as that we could with truth say that our religion had rendered us any better than the other nations of the earth. If in truth we have been chosen, thus speak our opponents, we have done little for our faith, and in the same manner our faith has done little for us; that consequently both our own example and what we have endured can give but slight weight to the words of Scripture, seeing that so small an amount of good has resulted therefrom.—We at once, in reply, will admit the whole argument in so far that we have done little to forward our faith, and that our worldly happiness on the other hand has been rather retarded than promoted by our being even nominally attached to it; but this admission is nothing against the truth or necessity of revelation, nor does this argue that we have not been benefitted in the highest degree by the possession of our blessed religion.

Let us see how the case stands.—God, to use a human phrase, found our ancestors subject to cruel slavery in the highly civilized country of Egypt, a land renowned in story for the magnificence of its architectural monuments, for the greatness of its king, the triumph of its warriors, and the wisdom of its priests. For at least two hundred years our fathers had been subjected to the arbitrary will of this refined

people, every hope seemed crushed, every avenue to preferment was effectually closed against the abhorred slaves, who worshipped not the gods of Egypt. Still, though they suffered grievous wrongs, it was unavoidable that they should learn the worships and crimes of their masters; these bowed down to stocks and stones, looked with veneration upon the bull, the beetle, and the stork, and deified men who had borne rule on earth. Although some knowledge of the divine truth given to Abraham may have remained with the suffering Israelites, and although they may have been disinclined at first to assimilate in worship to their masters: it could not be otherwise in the nature of things, but that from the constant habit of obedience they should in the lapse of several generations learn to regard themselves as an inferior race, and to respect instinctively those whose commands they were compelled implicitly to obey, under penalty of personal chastisement in addition to their involuntary servitude. The free-born first slave no doubt revolted in his very soul against the yoke he was compelled to bear; but the son reared in slavery felt the bands no longer galling; it was his lot, and though fainting under the toil, he looked upon it as his rightful though hard heritage. So imagine, then, a whole people robbed of their desire for freedom, surrounded by evil influences, among those whom they were compelled to obey, and whom they therefore involuntarily respected as masters and superiors: and do you believe that the religion of the masters did not make some lodgment in their hearts, even if it failed, as we may fairly suppose, to induce them to attach themselves to it? Doubtless the Israelites in Egypt en-

tered far in the gates of uncleanliness; they became steeped in error, and perhaps learned in the process of events to worship the Lord through the mediatorial agencies, as they regarded them, of the gods of Egypt. It is said, that in that elegant country everything had been typified; eternity was represented through a winged sun, the mystery which surrounds all creation by a veiled figure, and so in an immense number of ideas and things; and when these ideas were at length represented by male or female deities, they were worshipped, it is said so at least, by the priests as attributes of the One, the sole Creator, whom Abraham had proclaimed, and who had revealed himself to man from the beginning. The more spiritual now we assume Egyptian idolatry to have been in remote antiquity, when our progenitors sojourned there, the more is it probable that they became tainted with the semblance of truth which was offered to their acceptance. And how could they well resist? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was represented by no image, and dwelt in no temple, did not appear to them, to relieve them from their sorrows: the children of Ham were at peace under their emblematic worship, whilst the descendants of Shem were servants unto them. If then we assume a high intellectual standard for the idolatry prevailing in Egypt, the more, upon reflection, will you find it to have been calculated to induce the Israelites of the day to give ear to the instruction which the priests of that country conveyed to the people respecting their belief. Perhaps you may discover something analogous in the apostacy of some Israelites to the modern Nazarene doctrines, commonly termed the Protestant faith.

Whilst the new system based upon Judaism was exhibited with all the adjuncts of image-worship, and it stood far apart from the simplicity of our own belief, apostates could not frame any excuse for forsaking ours and adopting its behests. But since by the magic spell of a reformer a new feature has been introduced, since the Bible has been made ostensibly the rule of faith, and what we term idolatrous has been removed from the churches: some have been found, who profess that they are able to reconcile the mysticism of a divided deity, and the belief in a mediatorial power, with the Decalogue, though this explicitly teaches, "I AM the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me." This aberration of a sound intellect we witness in our own day, after sciences have become domesticated in every household, and knowledge is accessible to every one who chooses to stretch forth his hand and take of the fruit of the tree that stands before him: and can we wonder that, unless by a miracle, our fathers should have been inclined to listen, at least, to the ideas of their masters, when we view their comparative ignorance and the extreme hardships to which they were subjected?

They therefore left the country of their servitude with ideas far from consonant with the divine kingdom for which they were destined; on the contrary, sunk into the slough of falsehood and error, they had needs to be purified before they could become the domicil of the word of the Lord, as had been promised to Abraham. They were therefore led to the foot of Sinai, and here the remedy was applied to cure them of their mental disorder. But what was

this remedy? Words—truths—doctrines: communicated, we admit, in a supernatural manner, but still nothing but words, truths, doctrines. Yet they went forth on their mission, to conquer hearts, to invigorate souls, to banish unbelief, to establish a nation, to subdue the world. Do you however believe that the effect was to be instantaneous? Then God should not have come to teach, to prove the heart, as He did, but to *create;* He would have been compelled to effect a change in human nature, to elevate man to an angelic state, free from the inclination to sin, hence unable to trespass against the will of God. This, however, we know was not done; the creation of the heart of flesh and the removal of the heart of stone were not consummated at that eventful time; this has been reserved for another great era, when the glory of the Lord will appear before all flesh, when indeed we all shall have become of one accord to serve our Father with one will, purified of our past iniquity.—Man was thus left as he had always been in nature, though far elevated above his former condition in knowledge; before he was given to sin, and had no guide on the dark path of life, save the few truths which tradition had left him. But he lived now no longer in patriarchal simplicity, there was no longer the head of the clan teaching all its members the way of the Lord to exercise righteousness and justice; and hence after he fell under the dominion of cunning priests and arbitrary tyrants, who concealed from him generation after generation the light they possessed (presuming even that the priests of Egypt and Chaldea knew the truth themselves whilst they taught error to the people), he had no resources left to rise above the degra-

dation of intellect and morals in which he had been plunged. But the revelation on Horeb changed all this forever! the truths before known were proclaimed with every mark of solemnity, in an audible, intelligible manner to a whole people; ideas before unknown, or concealed as mysteries from the vulgar, were scattered abroad as the common inheritance of high and low, the wise and the foolish, of him who sacrificed and him who came not to the altar with his offering. Nay more, the vulgar errors of the day were denounced as uncongenial with the divine kingdom; mediatorial power was denied to any existing being, for it was said even before the exodus: "And I will pass through the land of Egypt in that night, and smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man unto cattle, and on all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment,—I am the Lord" (Exodus xii. 12); which verse has been well elucidated by our wise men: "And I will pass through the land of Egypt," I myself, and not an angel; "And I will smite every first-born," I myself, and not a seraph; "And on all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment," I myself, and not a messenger; "I am the Lord," I am the everlasting One, and there is none other. There was no associate in all the redemption, there was no companion in all the revelation, there was no mediator in all the power so evidently and gloriously displayed before the admiring gaze of all.—And more yet was accomplished, the TRUTHS of the law were not left to tradition to be promulgated or withheld, they were written down, first on the two tables of the covenant by the hand of Power itself, and next by human agency, by the hand of Moses in the book of

the law. Here then was the scheme complete, there were audible words, intelligible to the understanding no less than audible to the ear, two millions heard them, and after-generations could not henceforward forget what their fathers had thus received; there were truths delivered, the veil of darkness and deception, which had covered the earth, was rent in twain, the secrets of God's counsels were revealed at once, in one hour, to an entire people, surrendered from heaven to become the inheritance of man; and doctrines of life were propounded which are lucid in their very inception, and which give life to all who lay hold of them as their support, as their guides, as the enlighteners of their reason.

Thus stood Israel, when Moses went up to the mount to receive the two tables which God had written, full of the awful yet consolatory words which He had addressed to our fathers on Sinai. They were yet new in their faith, their feet had scarcely commenced to travel on the to them still untrodden path. The prophet was hidden from their sight, the consuming fire had ceased to terrify them, they had become used to it from its constant presence, and the absence of the prophet for so long a period as forty days was almost too great a trial for the unthinking many, though the few who had rightly imbibed the spirit of God quailed not though the presence of their deliverer no longer inspired them to obedience. The masses perhaps reverted back to the splendid temples of Egypt, to the immense piles erected at Thebes, at Karnac, and other places, to the deities of Mitzraim; the fertile fields no doubt floated in their imagination where, though they had been slaves, they could

eat the fruits that were around them in abundance: whilst to their own newly revealed God there was no temple dedicated, not even a spot consecrated in the vast bounds of the desert where they lay encamped, whilst of all the good promised them their sensual appetite realized nothing, in the immense extent of sand which stretched around them in every direction. Understand well, the religion was new, the prophet was away, and they had just emerged from slavery. Is it then wonderful that their desire for Egypt's gods as well as for Egypt's fleshpots should revive upon the first opportunity for rebellion? They therefore rushed to Aaron, and distinctly told him that, Moses having disappeared, they knew not whither, they demanded of him to construct for them gods who should go before them, symbolical images, which should be carried in their front on their marches as was done with heathen nations; for they wanted some visible figure before which they could worship, as was the practice in the country where they had dwelt so long. The very figure made by Aaron in the confusion of the moment must prove to you that this view is correct; he moulded for them a golden calf, the bull, as is well known, being one of the figurative idols of Egypt, representing one of their gods under this outward symbol. But no sooner was one image presented to them, than they included the whole of the system to which they were accustomed: "These are thy gods, O Israel! who have brought thee up from the land of Egypt," they exclaimed; the whole of the revelation was forgotten by those who had demanded a symbol, and they ascribed their very deliverance to the intermediate agency of the gods of

Egypt. It is strange that human intellect should be so perverted; but this is not the only case in which we find it so. History, in many instances, exhibits the same folly in nations, following in a train of senseless folly, till they awaken only at the brink of ruin; and each individual will in his own life or experience be able to call to mind innumerable examples, where he or others have followed out a course of conduct against which their own better nature or sound judgment rebelled whilst transgressing.

But the deed was done; the emblem of a visible deity once before their eyes, the Decalogue once infringed by making to themselves an image, they rushed away from the simplicity of worship, where the heart feels and the tongue utters scarcely audible sounds, to the brutal rioting which distinguished heathen festivals. The period for which Moses had been called to the mount had just expired, and he received the two tables, for which he had so long dwelt in the presence of the Most High, in a manner as no mortal has ever yet dwelt, and had heard and seen things which had never been vouchsafed to any other son of Adam to witness, when he was told, that the people which he loved so much, in whose behalf he had returned, though an exile, unto Pharaoh, to demand their liberation, had so soon forgotten all that had been wrought for them, and had made unto themselves a golden calf as god, and sacrificed unto it and worshipped it, and said "These are thy gods, O Israel! which have brought thee up from the land of Egypt." Moses then descended, after praying for forgiveness, and declining for himself to become the great nation promised unto Abraham which should

descend from his seed. At the foot of the mountain he met his faithful servant Joshua, who had remained there all the time that his master had staid on the mount, and together they approached the camp. "There is the noise of war in the camp," was Joshua's thought, when he heard the tumult. But the practised ear of Moses knew better. He had, doubtless, during his residence with the wise men of Egypt, learnt the manner of their worship. He therefore said, "It is neither the shout of victory nor that of defeat, but the voice of singing which I hear," no doubt alluding to a species of hymn sung in alternate parts by the whole crowd at the idol festivities.—And so it was; Moses came to the camp, and there presented themselves to his anguished sight the people dancing around the upraised calf, shouting in their madness as though they had found their long-lost god. They, who are acquainted with heathen mythology, will no doubt recall similar instances of senseless joy among Roman and Grecian rites; as there was, on the other hand, mourning on occasions of the death or disappearance of these creatures of a diseased fancy. Here then were the people in a state which the Bible well terms a disgrace to their opponents; they had thrown off the yoke, which though light, was too heavy for their shoulders, they had cast aside their glory, and paid adoration to the image of a grass-eating ox. But did the prophet despair of the ultimate triumph of truth? did he believe that the word of God would return empty? Far from it; in his indignation, it is true, he broke the tables which he had received; because he deemed the apostate-people unworthy of possessing the heavenly treasure of

which these pieces of stone were merely the emblems; and he threw from his hands the tables, and broke them at the foot of the mount. Now observe the legislator's wisdom. He did not call around him the people to upbraid them, whilst in the frenzy of their madness, with their ingratitude, it would have been useless; but he invoked the aid of those who had remained faithful to the standard of the Lord, who were the brothers of Moses, his own tribe of Levi; into their hands he placed the avenging sword, and they without mercy, on that awful day of transgression and madness, struck dismay in the hearts of the riotous multitude who, when their intoxication was over, and when they found their prophet overthrowing their idol and its worshippers, returned to their allegiance to the Lord and his law; and not till then did Moses speak to the people concerning their great sin, told them how grievously they had offended, and that atonement was needed for their transgression. Let us now follow in admiration the unselfish man, whom God has chosen, to the august Presence. He knocks at the gates of Mercy, not glossing over the sin that had been committed; but he knew himself innocent of all blame, and he had been assured that he was an accepted and faithful servant before the Lord. If even therefore the whole nation had been exterminated, even his brother Aaron, who with himself had been the instrument of the freedom of Israel, he would himself have stood unscathed amidst the destruction, and the *Mosaic* nation would have, in process of time, supplanted that called by the name of *Israel*. Yet he cared not to live, should his brothers perish. "But if thou forgivest not their sin, I pray

thee blot me out from thy book which thou hast written;" in the book of the law, Moses's name was already recorded as the messenger of God to Israel; it was a glorious lot thus to be destined to live forever in the grateful memorial of all future ages. But all this was nothing to the prophet. "Blot me out, I pray thee," was his earnest entreaty, "forgive, or else I wish not to be remembered." Yet would the Lord not accept the self-sacrifice thus nobly tendered by his messenger, and He said:

מי אשר חטא לי אמחנו מספרי : שמות לב׳ לג׳ :

"Him, who hath sinned against me, him I will blot out from my book." Exodus xxxii. 33.

But the atonement asked was granted upon a partial execution of the judgment; many perished by divine visitation, besides those who had fallen by the Levites' swords; but we were taught emphatically, that no one can be a mediator between God and the sinner, "the soul that sinneth, even that alone must die;" there is no atonement, except by repentance, which will wipe off sin, make the crooked straight, the unclean clean, and restore man to divine favour. Although not immediately connected with our subject, I cannot avoid reminding you, how utterly the plain sense of Scripture is opposed to all anti-Jewish doctrines; for if the mediatorship for sin were indeed a doctrine of Scripture, here would have been the place to reveal it clearly to Moses, thus "not thee will I accept, but I will send one who shall reconcile me to a sinning world." But no such idea is held out; "Him who hath sinned against me, him alone,

none else will I blot out from my book, him will I punish according to his deeds, none else in his stead can be chastised, none else can be accepted."

But the chief idea involved in the whole transaction, besides the exhibition of the frailty of human nature, is the doctrine of repentance, which we are taught for the first time in the Bible. The people laid aside their ornaments and mourned; and God approved of their repentance and promised to spare them, and not visit upon them their iniquity at that time. We at once will see, that immediately after the Lord accepted from them gifts as a free-will offering to build the tabernacle in the wilderness which was to be the residence of the glory which has been promised should abide with them. We are therefore warranted in believing that the repentance and humiliation of the people were favourably accepted, and that we have at the same time the best assurance, that for the greatest transgressions repentance will avail. So also teach our wise men in the spirit of mercy which pervades the law:

לא היו ישראל ראוים לאותו מעשה ולא היה דוד
ראוי לאותו מעשה אלא לתן פתחון פה לבעלי
תשובה:

"Israel were not worthy of that deed, nor was David fit for that deed, only to give a hopeful example to repentant sinners."

And we may argue thus: If Israel were accepted after apostatizing in a body from the law of God, if David, so usually righteous, committing in his forgetfulness of duty a deed of daring wickedness which

was an offence even to the enemies of the Lord, was accepted again upon repentance, how much greater right have we, each in his humble walk of life, to expect to be forgiven by our heavenly Father; surely He will not be wroth forever, and when the soul that He has made asks in humility and truth to be forgiven, He will to a certainty hearken, and do according to all that the penitent asks of Him.

Long as I have detained you in this, what you may deem the preliminary part merely of a subject of the highest importance to us as believers, to elucidate the consistency of Scripture, and the use of our religion to ourselves, and of our adherence to the same, it was impossible to let the present discussion be condensed in a briefer space than I have done. Imperfectly as I have sketched the subject, it must strike you as removing, perhaps, some objections which the revilers of revelation bring against the truth of our hopes. All I can do is to furnish you with materials for thinking; it is yours to follow them up and to investigate for yourselves. At all events, I trust that the words spoken to-day will not be forgotten, but dwell in your soul when occasionally doubts come to your mind or are presented to you by others. It is not improbable that at a future day, I may speak again on this topic; but in the meantime let us pray for light, that we may be made intelligent in the word of God, and learn to believe in silence where cold reasoning might remain unsatisfied.—May thus the light of truth guide us to eternal wisdom. Amen.

Adar 21st. } 5605.
Feb'y 28th. }

DISCOURSE III.

ON OBEDIENCE.

God of life everlasting! remember us in thy goodness and give us the light of thy countenance. Prone to sin, because of our human origin, we thoughtlessly expose ourselves daily to influences which are unholy, and listen to the evil counsels which our passions and the allurements of the world offer to our acceptance. Were it not for thy law which protects our unsteady feet, we would long since have yielded ourselves hopelessly to the empire of sin; but it is thy wisdom which restrains, it is thy word which guides us securely. And even when we have rebelled, how ready art Thou to receive us again, to instruct us anew, to render us once more worthy of being thy children in whom Thou delightest. And of this consoling truth does thy law speak in every page, and especially there, where Thou didst ask of those who had transgressed to bring a sacrifice to thy sanctuary, that thus offering they might be induced to reflect, repent, and be again received in favour. Yet now, O Lord! we have no temple, nor altar, our heritage is wasted, and thy children are wanderers on the earth. Still we know thy goodness. Thou hast not cast us off, and we are yet Israel the beloved. Receive then the words of our mouth, the prayers of contrite hearts as an agreeable savour, to atone for our sins, to wipe out our guilt, as Thou hast ever forgiven, for the sake of thy

holy Name and the righteousness of our fathers. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Every system, be it a code of laws, a science, nay even any particular trade, has its peculiarities which distinguish it from all others, and by which it can at once be recognized by those familiar with the same. It is therefore but reasonable to expect that, in becoming familiar with Judaism, we shall discover in it also some traits which are entirely its own, and which mark it as a system differing essentially from all others. And in so thinking we shall not be disappointed; for Judaism has its especial characteristic, and this is "OBEDIENCE." Other religions which are akin to ours demand, what is termed, "faith" as absolutely requisite, and as the sole requirement for any man to be saved, whilst but a secondary importance is assigned to religious acts proper. But we, on the other hand, have been differently instructed; nothing less than absolute obedience, founded upon a firm belief or faith in the truth of the Lord and his law, can satisfy our conscience, and thus professions, even if they be the most heartfelt and sincere, fail of constituting us Israelites, and render us instead of this children of sin.

Let us examine then simply how an Israelite should be educated to enable him to lead a consistent, religious life; for I hold it superfluous to prove the necessity of our adhering to our faith; hence the duty of fulfilling its behests become at once apparent. How are we then to educate the Israelite? is a question of no small importance to every one belonging to our

communion. Let me also observe incidentally that not parents and teachers alone are herein interested; for it concerns those too who are childless and have not the guardianship of youth; all Israelites are bound to see that their religion be respected, and thus all have to take heed that a due share of proper education be afforded to all those they can benefit by their influence.

The Israelite's education should be practical; that is to say, from the first moment that reason begins to direct his acts he should be initiated in religious deeds, and be thus gradually led from one act to the other, till he becomes familiar with every precept, attainable in our present state of national dispersion. At the same time, and as soon as he can understand instruction of a higher nature, but only after he has learned already to obey, let him be informed of the reason for the acts which he practises himself, and which others around him perform. Tell him then of the existence of the great Creator, whose manifestation is revealed in everything which the eye beholds, whose voice is heard in every sound that reaches the ear, whose goodness sustains and governs all creatures, whose power is unlimited, whose wisdom is unsearchable; and when he naturally asks, "What must I do to please this great Being?" tell him that He asks nothing else than obedience to the law, which benevolently teaches us how to love the Lord with all our heart and soul, and how to love our neighbour like ourselves. When you have proceeded thus far, when you have succeeded in fixing his attention to what is so good and holy as God and his law, you should endeavour to make him intelligent in the de-

sign of the different commandments. The recurrence of seasons of festivity and joyful or mournful days will give you ample material for conversation, and be the means of explaining to him the reasons, so far as they are known to us, for certain observances connected with them. For instance the little ceremony which we practise on the festival of Purim of reading aloud the book of Esther, though it is not commanded in the books of the Law, will afford you an excellent opportunity to speak, for instance, after this fashion.

A time was when we Israelites did not live, as we do now, scattered in small bodies all over the world, oppressed as we are in some countries, banished from others, and equals with the other inhabitants in a few other lands. We formed on the contrary a state of our own, governed no less in civil than religious matters by the law of our God. This code, whilst it pronounces punishment against those who wilfully transgress the commandments, is nevertheless one of mercy and equal rights; all the citizens of the Jewish state, whether Israelites or not, were alike in the eye of the Law; the stranger could not be oppressed, though he served not God the Lord, but we were commanded to love him as ourselves. Now it was made a condition of the continuance of the Israelites as a separate state, that they should be obedient in everything to the precepts of the law on which their civil and religious codes were founded; but that, if they should prove disobedient, they should not alone lose their independence, but should be driven out of their country which had been promised to their first founder, Abraham the Hebrew, because he had been obedient to the commands which he had received.

It was on obedience alone the Jewish state had been founded, and when this was withdrawn by the people, there was no other remedy but to scatter the disobedient among other countries, that they should learn there the difference between submission to the mild decrees of their God, and the arbitrary tyranny of princes and nations who had no natural love for the Israelites. This event actually took place; for though frequently warned by good and wise men, sent to reprove them for their sins, they persisted in bidding defiance to the laws of God; till at length the threatened evil occurred, and they were first conquered by foreign enemies, and then gradually driven altogether from their country, Palestine. They were living scattered in many lands; but the greater portion in the dominion of the kings of Persia, who had conquered many countries and ruled in the height of their power from India at the east to the south and west at Ethiopia, and among the rest over Palestine, where a few Jews had again settled under the protection of these Persian kings, whilst the greatest part remained behind in what is called captivity. It now happened that one of these rulers of the East was capricious and tyrannical; he had favourites and bestowed on them whatever they might ask, and again punished them as suddenly, when they incurred his displeasure. It was the fate of the Jews to incur the hatred of one of these favourites, named Haman; because Mordecai, one of the tribe of Benjamin, refused to bend his knee to him, which the other officers of the royal palace did by the king's orders. He then sought to obtain his master's consent, for a large sum of money, to exterminate all the Jews in the whole Persian em-

pire, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, commonly called Adar. But it had also happened that the king had married a certain Jewess, named Esther, without being acquainted with her kindred or faith; who, on hearing from her relative Mordecai the danger which threatened her people, went to the king to ask his mercy, after having prepared herself and all Jews for three days by fasting, prayer, and penitence.—The king at length granted her a pardon for her people, without as yet knowing for whom she prayed; and upon demanding to know who had meditated this evil against the friends of the queen, she pointed out Haman as the author of this daring act. The decree of exterminating the Jews was consequently reversed, and their enemies suffered the fate which they had meditated for them. The Israelites of that day, feeling how great a debt of gratitude they had incurred to the Lord for his mercy in delivering them in so signal a manner from impending destruction, instituted an annual fast and festival to commemorate the kindness which they had experienced, and the public act which is performed in all synagogues is the reading of the history of the event, recorded in the book of Esther, so called after the queen of the Persian king, who so bravely risked her own life, and disdained not to avow herself as one of those persons whom a decree of the king had doomed to destruction.

This is a brief outline of an oral instruction which any parent, teacher, or friend, may and should give to an Israelitish child upon every occasion, and you will easily perceive that I have condensed purposely all the information in the smallest possible space, and

that the subject readily admits of speaking of the reasons of certain laws of the Bible, their influence on the people, the contrary effect of a system of legislation based upon the will of mere men, the impossibility of such a decree as that of Ahasuerus being promulgated by any Jewish prince under the sanction of the Law of Moses; then the nature of the prophets and their predictions, and in fact every thing connected with our history, our religion, and our sacred literature. But all this should have but one tendency and one object, to wit, to impress on the young heart the absolute necessity of obedience, or in other words, of being guided by the revealed will of God. An education so conducted by parents and teachers, and conversation by friends which will thus attract the curiosity of youth, and tend from its very nature to sink permanently and deeply into the mind, cannot fail of being of infinite benefit to the development of a true and faithful religious character, which will not suffer an entire obliteration, when in later periods of life the world is entered with a high zest, and when pleasures and business are pursued with the avidity with which worldlings seize upon every thing, which can gratify the senses and administer to the passions. —Parents however neglect all this; they are very often careless about obedience themselves, they have no Sabbaths, no season for prayer, no time for national mourning, no festivals, no domestic duties; and they expect nevertheless that their children will, like themselves, remain nominal Jews, and that the mere fact of their being descended from Abraham will be enough to snatch them from the midst of temptations, when these appeal to them to forsake

their faith which is so easy of practice, in the various ways on which the household of Israel is remodelled by its unworthy members! And should it unfortunately happen that their child should quit the Synagogue, they will console their conscience by averring that they have done enough by merely giving him occasionally, as it were, a glimpse of what real religion is! So, likewise, will many worthy people, who are obedient to our faith, express themselves unable to comprehend how their children, who had always a good example at home, could so far forget themselves, as to swerve from the line of duty in which they had instructed them! But both these classes should consider, that mere theoretical or mechanical religion is alike unfit for influencing the mind permanently. It may answer indeed in times of general conformity, especially when the pressure from without induces our brothers to seek refuge from their great Protector, to let children become habitually religious from seeing all their companions, teachers, and parents, in short, all whom they know, acting uniformly after one system; they thus may become ceremonial by rote, and under favourable circumstances imbibe also a proper spirit. But at the present day, when this outward pressure has been in a great measure removed, and we are becoming daily more alike in habits with the gentiles, there is something more powerful than mere habit required to constitute our rising generation pious Israelites. There must be instruction founded on reason conveyed from the earliest infancy, and it is not to be doubted that the result will be highly gratifying, and be the means of restoring the now failing obedience

to religion which we all have so much cause to deplore. Some persons are foolish enough to suppose that it is that indefinite thing, called "the spirit of the age," or "the nature of the country" which is inimical to religion; undoubtedly there is some truth in the position as far as example acting on the mind goes. But to suppose that this or the other ten years, or hundred years, this or that country is unsuited to Judaism, is certainly arguing without due reflection. There is one thing only needed, an enlightened religious education, adapted to the circumstances of the state of sciences and political equality existing around us; and then surely the fruits will prove that the seed has been well planted. There are in this century, and in this country, men and women whose piety is unwavering, whose faith is staunch, whose example sheds around them a beneficent influence; but you will always find that they have received instruction, or that they have enjoyed an example in their elders which protected them against violent transgression. Let this then be resorted to; let education and example at home be afforded to our youth; and who can despair of the success of his religion? There are many here, and in every other town, who sin, but deplore what they consider the necessity for sinning; but enlighten them, and show them that sinning is not necessary to them: and have we not reason to hope that they will return to the full companionship of their brothers? And if we now wish to have the children around us able to appreciate the benefits of our faith, can we resort to any thing else than proper schooling, to any thing else than instruction? or else how can they resist

following those who, themselves Jews, sin because they find it profitable? They must be able to withstand evil, and this can be done only by giving them such reason for being obedient, as will outweigh all arguments which cupidity, or indolence, or desire might offer in favour of transgression.

Besides all this, there is another powerful reason why this early training is so desirable. It is this: to give the mind a taste for things of a higher order than the mere passing events of the day. Appeal to a worldling for aid in any good cause, and he at once will calculate how much money or labour it will cost him; he will convince himself to his own satisfaction, that he has no money to give, though he hoards up daily sums which he thinks he will never need in his business; he has no time, though his hours hang heavily on his hands, as some useless thing which he strives in a hundred ways to get rid of. But speak of such a matter to an enlightened person who has some other sentiments than the mere body, and he will be able to appreciate your thoughts; he will have money to give, if he even have no more than he can consume; and will have an hour's leisure, though he work for bread from morning till night.—Now I need not tell you how much we suffer in this country from want of concert, from the absence of a united effort to do something for our faith, worthy of it, worthy of us; but where is the use to appeal? Even those professedly religious find nothing in such schemes to claim their attention; their fathers were like themselves, Jews without preaching, without books, without union; disorder reigned in the Synagogue; education was superficial or ill-directed in former times;

what need is there then for it nowadays? "Are we to follow in the gentile path, and do as they do? must we preach because they preach? must we print books because they do so? are we not Jews?" Then we are met constantly when any thing useful is spoken of, with, There is no occasion for it, it is new, and Jews have not done so hitherto. "But the circumstances have changed." It is still nothing to the purpose, they aver, as they do not understand the use of these things.—This latter objection is no doubt true as far as they are concerned; the good effects of enlightenment in religion are not perceived by many, and they would thus allow religion to perish in their presence, and they would do nothing to aid it, though lamenting its downfall.—But if we can succeed, by any effort we make, in rearing a rising generation who are to feel the weight of the truth of their religious conviction, who can experience the force and cogency of the reasonableness of the precepts, who have a tender conscience which can be alarmed and reached by a preacher's voice: have we not succeeded in establishing a home for Judaism in this age, in this country? will we not be able afterwards to enlist the men in united labours to do something for each other, and for those who are less blessed than themselves? Should we live to see this, we shall not be told on proposing any useful measure, that it is useless because it was not in vogue five hundred years ago, or that it savours of imitation of the gentiles, when perhaps the custom was originally borrowed, for instance that of public preaching, from Israelites of better days than our own.—But in thus mentioning the term "better days than our own," do not believe that I in

the least despair of a return of them; perhaps I may be called hence whilst the days are yet evil; but that the good will come again, I cannot doubt. We are at present in what may be termed the state of transition; the ancient order of absolute conformity without inquiry is passing away; the brief period of absolute unbelief, when every thing was doubted, is also lapsing fast, if it has not departed altogether. We are therefore at the commencement of an era of free inquiry with the tendency towards religion; hence it is not to be supposed that there will not be contending elements all struggling for supremacy; but we require no spirit of prophecy, though this has been vouchsafed in the Bible likewise, to predict, that there will be soon a famine in the land, not a hunger for bread, not a thirst for water, but to know the way of the Lord. Mere authority may perhaps be disregarded; but when one can prove "thus says the Lord," the people will be anxious to do accordingly, having, as they then will have, full and undivided faith in the word of God.

But as usual with me, I have wandered away from the subject which I first spoke of; I must therefore return to it without farther detaining you on the incidental observations I have made, interesting as they may be.—I stated that, as our religion is one of observances, the Israelite's education ought to look to this chiefly, that he be obedient, in order that he may bear the true distinguishing mark of a son of Israel. I have recommended instruction in the reasons of the laws as the main lever, in inducing the mind to a conformity with the duties demanded of us. But in doing so we must be very cautious not to render re-

ligion as a mere contract between God and man, wherein so many reasons are assigned as there are precepts, and where every little matter is made perfectly manifest to the commonest understanding. The law of Moses is not of this kind; many things there are which have an evident solution in the history of our people and the common sense of man. But there are others again which are neither referable to history nor deducible to clear reasoning for a basis; since they are edicts of the great King who, in commanding them, wished to give us means of righteousness, in which we, as children, should yield our reasoning to his superior wisdom and guidance. In reading of them in Scripture we will never find any other reason assigned than "I am the Lord your God," meaning they are emanations from the Deity, tests of obedience, and hence no matters for speculation. We may, it is true, without incurring guilt, strive to clear up the mystery of these laws; but if we do not succeed, we cannot religiously aver, that we are absolved from obeying, because we do not understand. Such is the custom of the vain-glorious, who place their reason on a par with their Maker's understanding, forgetting the immeasurable distance which they occupy from the Infinite in goodness and knowledge. In educating therefore the Jewish child, proper care should be taken to make this fact at once manifest to his comprehension. Show him how many precepts there are which you can explain to him in their origin, cause, and effect; and then lead him to the gradual comprehension that obedience is of the highest importance in a family, how much more in the great world, and that hence man is of reason and

necessity bound to follow the injunctions which he has received, though he should not be able to define clearly the motives which governed Supreme Wisdom in ordaining them. Obedience thus obtained is not a blind following of uncertain dogmas, but the exhibition of a well-founded confidence that He, who so graciously bestowed a law, which in its effects would render all the human race happy if all would submit to its commands, could not give us any details, which would be otherwise than aiding towards carrying out the great scheme of the world's ultimate redemption from sin; and there can be no doubt, that if a child be well grounded in the historical reasons for many ordinances, and is told of others, that they were given as distinctive signs to mark the Israelites as a peculiar people, who have received a mission of the highest importance to all mankind, he will of necessity feel himself impelled to obey in all things, and to follow on the path of duty there where his God leads.

Among the laws just spoken of, where no reason is assigned to us, are those relating to the sacrifices of which we have read in the section of the law for to-day. Sacrifices, it is true, were not originally a mere Jewish rite; for Abel already sacrificed, soon after the creation of man on earth; in truth, gratitude for the many favours received naturally impels man to do something in return; hence the devoting of a part of his possessions to the service of God is a natural impulse. But the details and manner of bringing the various offerings, are absolutely peculiar to Israel, and bear evidently the stamp of Authority, which all our other laws have indelibly impressed on them. The sacrifices, both the voluntary and the compul-

sory, were intended as aids to devotion, gratitude, or repentance; that much we do know; but the manipulations of the blood, meat, and fat, are ordinances, truly so called, that is to say, they are enactments depending not on human reasoning, but on the immediate and declared will of God; and as such we require faith in their efficiency to be able to appreciate them correctly. Hence he who brought a sacrifice, at the time when animal offerings were acceptable, and when the temple yet stood, had to devote his whole soul to the act he was about to commit, the thought had to accompany the slaying, the sprinkling of the blood, up to the burning of the victim or the eating of the flesh; every thing was to be superintended with a scrupulous earnestness; and he was to rely upon these acts of obedience, accompanied by an entire faith in the truth of God, for the efficacy of the atonement to be made therewith. Some have fancied that something else than the sacrifice was meant in the atonement made by the offering at the altar; but on inspecting the whole law not a trace of such a doctrine is found; hence we must say that it is not the true solution of the mystery attending the subject. Like other acts, however, the sacrifices were a test of obedience, and only when thus brought were they considered acceptable. And thus we read:

וסמך ידו על ראש העלה ונרצה לו לכפר עליו :
ויקרא א' ד' :

"And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him favourably to make atonement for him." Leviticus i. 4.

So, you see, it was the act of obedience which made the sacrifice acceptable; and then it made no difference how slight the gift was; for it was the will which consecrated the gift, it was full faith which hallowed the handful of flour or the stately ox, which rendered alike the humble stranger in a strange land with the king, who issued forth from his palace followed by rejoicing thousands.—Now, it is true, however, the sacrifices are abolished, because our sins have destroyed our altars; but the faith of Israel in Israel's God is not yet destroyed: this abides with us forever, even as the blessed Spirit of God which we have in his law. If then we have sinned, let us awaken our ancient faith in God's goodness, to seek his courts with prayer, and his presence with humility; and then we have well-founded hopes that He will hear us even in the lands of our dispersion, and do and forgive according to all that He has promised unto our fathers.—And may his love protect and bless us, even now and forever. Amen.

Veadar 12th. } 5605.
March 21st. }

DISCOURSE IV.

TRUE GREATNESS.

O HOLIEST BEING, most perfect and powerful God! be with us in all our assemblies, and let thy spirit be in our midst whenever we meet to proclaim thy Name. Thou art indeed the Stay of the needy, the Comforter of those that mourn; and Thou shieldest the weak from the grasp of the presumptuous and violent. But what are our merits that we have been brought thus far? what is it that we have accomplished in the pursuit of the mission which Thou hast confided to our care? How froward and rebellious have we been as a people and as individuals; and still we in our need have been aided by Thy power, comforted in our distress by thy spirit, and shielded on the day of distress by thy mercy. Indeed are we unworthy of thy grace by means of our manifold sins; but Thou hast willed to bless thy people, and to preserve unto them the covenant Thou madest with their fathers. On this, therefore, do we rely, but not on our righteousness, and we invoke Thee, as humble and dependent recipients of bounty implore their benefactor. O that Thou wouldst bless us with thy goodness, and let us obtain that favour which Thou hast always poured out so benignantly over Israel; and let us farther experience the consoling truth, that we shall ever live in the light of thy countenance, and be guarded from evil as the mother watches over her first-born, through

that loving mercy which proves Thee indeed the Father no less than the Governor of all things. May this be thy will. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In the prophecy of Malachi occur these emphatic words, which we will take as the subject of our contemplation to-day:

ושבתם וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע בין עבד אלהים לאשר לא עבדו : מלאכי ג' יח' :

"And ye shall return and see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between the servant of God and him who hath not served him." Malachi iii. 18.

Of all the difficulties, which they who wish to serve God encounter, there is perhaps not one so great as the apparent humble lot of those who follow steadily the path of religion; not that this is universally the case, not that the pious are uniformly poor and suffering from sickness and other tribulations, but that so many, comparatively speaking, are unblessed with the goods of this life, whilst they strive to execute the will of their Maker. And to ascend from individuals to nations, the same spectacle will present itself; the people chosen by the Lord to proclaim his glory has been for centuries under the cloud of suffering and contumely: while their proud opponents are at ease, and their countries are prosperous, and their governments are firmly established, and apparently bidding defiance to the blast of adversity. Says the righteous: "How is it, if my course pleases

God, that I fail in all my undertakings? How is it, if my wealthy neighbour offends his Maker by his violation of the precepts of our common faith, that his prosperity increases daily, and the pillars of his house are hourly strengthened?"—Say the Israelites: "How does it happen that not an age passes over us without some persecution being directed against us, though we remain true to the Law of God; whereas many of those nations who afflict us wrongfully seem to flourish, and nearly all, without exception, who are strangers to our religion, increase in power, the extent of territory, and the advance of refinement and civilization?" But such reasoning on the inefficiency of faithfulness to insure prosperity, and thus arguing that it is of no use to be religious according to the institutions of Moses, is both fallacious and unreasonable. When we see a man endowed with wealth, we have no guarantee that he is happy; and if we see nations in possession of refinement, and civilization, and power and conquest, it does not prove that such states are firmly established, so that they can bid defiance to the shocks of adversity. It is something more than mere external show which is required to lay the foundation of individual and national permanent happiness, and this something is at last the strength which is derived from a repose of conscience. It may sound somewhat singular to most of my hearers to use the words repose of conscience, as applied to whole communities; but upon reflection it will be found that it is quite as applicable to the body politic as to individuals. If the sense of the public is guided by a uniform acquiescence in high moral duties, when honesty, sobriety, and continence are the prevailing

practices of the high and lowly: there must be experienced a general feeling of security in the permanence of the government no less, than the wisdom of the institutions which produce this result. If, moreover, we find an unwavering rectitude in public functionaries, no receiving of bribes to shield the rich malefactor, no winking at wrong because the powerful are guilty, no abandoning of the poor to ignorance and crime because they are too humble to deserve the notice of the great; when we see all such traits in a people: we may freely say, that the conscience of the multitude is in a healthy condition, and the people are blessed with a treasure inappreciable in value.

The value of conscientious repose in individuals is well enough understood: it means not that a man does not feel the effects of any wicked act which he has committed, it does not mean that he has stupefied his monitor by hardening himself, and constantly participating in acts of iniquity; but that he has done nothing which of right should cause him to tremble to have his conduct exposed, to those whose indignation he should fear, that he cannot accuse himself of having violently transgressed against the precepts of religion. There may be men, however, so powerful, so lifted up by the possession of dominion, or of high, towering intellect which places them very far beyond the reach of the many, that they appear to bid defiance to the judgment of men; they excuse themselves, and others do the same for them, by averring that a special code must be applied to them, differing materially from the standard by which other men are judged. But is such an excuse reasonable? is it right, if even

we are only guided by mere human reasoning, to permit those highly favoured to revel in excesses, to commit violence, to be eccentric and immoral, because they are more endowed with genius, talent, reason, or power, than other men? Is intellect or power to be so degraded, that its possessor must needs sink below the level of humanity? Assuredly not; such acts as we have mentioned cannot tranquillize his conscience; let the world excuse him, let the incense of flattery be offered to him in its full disgusting measure: still he will know within himself the hollowness of all external splendour which leaves the heart unsatisfied; he will feel the guiltiness of his course, and, despite the pride of place, experience the humiliation within himself, that he deserves not the gift which a kind Providence has bestowed on him.

If we now survey the prosperity of nations and individuals, and measure it by the standard just laid down, if we look carefully in the interior of the outwardly-beautiful fabric which dazzles our vision: we will often find the pedestal on which virtue ought to stand occupied by some vain idol, the creature of some foolish conceit of nations or individuals, and that the cankerworm of destruction is busy to destroy the structure, which to the first view seems destined to stand forever. In nations we will see injustice in the seat of judgment; venality where equitable decisions ought to be expected; violence usurping the place of right, and scandalous immorality tolerated, because those in power are themselves too much stained with crime to lay the hand of retribution upon the offender. And if we examine the prosperity of many

individuals, we shall readily discover that fraud and rapine commenced the greatness of their house, and that oppression and cunning continue to add to the superstructure which was originally founded on iniquity. To say then that such nations or individuals are happy, would be to assert what is evidently not the fact; the nations may for a time longer continue on the earth in the exercise of the power incidental to their union; but other empires before them were subdued, and still they appeared in their day as great and unassailable as those of modern times. There was Babylon, and there was Assyria, and there was Macedon, and there was Rome, and many other people of antiquity, and they had beautiful cities, magnificent palaces, gorgeous temples, large fleets, powerful armies: and still they fell, and their memory is almost lost, save that the ruins of their buildings and their few books, that have come down to us, testify that such nations flourished, and were iniquitous and fell, and perished before the destruction that swept over them. How must the Israelites have felt when they entered Babylon in the train of the mighty conqueror Nebuchadnezzar; well might they hang their harps on the willows by the banks of the Phrat, and weep for anguish when they remembered Zion. Silenced was their song, mute were their harps, they were captives, carried from the land of God to the stranger's country. Around them stood the temples of idolatry exceeding in greatness a hundredfold their own loved sanctuary, which, though of much humbler dimensions, was to them the symbol of the divine presence; they recalled Mount Moriah, where God had promised an everlasting covenant to Abraham

for his obedience, and its altar of burnt-offering, its courts crowded by the throngs of the true believers who hurried thither at the seasons of our festivals, on the Passover, the Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. There they were in the presence of the hanging gardens, one of the wonders of the ancient world, the immensely high and thick walls which surrounded the magnificent city of their captivity, with its hundred gates of brass; and their hearts melted when they remembered their own sweet Jerusalem. Envy arose in their hearts at the prosperity of their proud conquerors. "Why suffer we, when the enemies of the Lord rejoice? whence is to come the avenger? who will recompense to our oppressors the day of Jerusalem's fall?" Thus they thought, and perhaps imagined their case overlooked by the Supreme Judge of the universe. But not seventy years had elapsed when the idols of Chaldea stooped before the arms of a new man, who rose by the sword; the empire of Babylon sunk before the Persian and Median conquerors, and the Israelites were again permitted to rebuild their wasted sanctuary on Moriah.

Again time elapsed, and contention and disunion broke down the strongholds of our commonwealth.—And there came a nation flying to conquest as the eagle hastens down from the clouds to gather up his prey, and they assailed us in all our cities, which the Lord had given us. O, it was a time of trouble unto Jacob! and city after city fell in the hands of the Romans, and they sat down in their might before the walls of Jerusalem. Whatever bravery could achieve in the unequal contest, where famine and disunion within aided the ravages of the sword without, was done by

the desperate and valiant men who occupied the last refuge of our people. But the contest was vain, and the brave and the timid alike, who had escaped the slaughter and the hunger, had to wander away from the soil which they had saturated with their blood, and the dust of which was dear and sacred to their heart. They were led forth to Rome in order that some might be chained to the chariot of their conqueror, and to grace his triumph, only to be slaughtered when the humiliating pageant was over. There stood again mute the awestruck captives in the city of marble palaces and countless temples, one vying with the other in magnificence and splendour. Shouts of triumph and derision met them on all sides, the Senate and the Roman people were around them in the glory of conquest, with a world subdued at their feet, with wealth pouring in from almost every country wherein civilization had taken up its abode. And here were the humbled Israelites, in anguish and bitterness of heart compelled to labour on the triumphal arch on which is recorded their overthrow; and they were a prey to constant persecutions for their belief, whether it was the heathen emperor who ruled, or the convert to the new theory of faith which aimed to build itself up on the supposed ruins of our blessed religion. And how did the captives feel! let history tell you how sore they deemed the weight of their chains, and how valiantly they strove to break their fetters. But alas! the struggle was fruitless, other millions perished, and the tyrants aimed at nothing less than to blot out the name of the city of our desires from the face of the earth, and we were interdicted from entering those gates where formerly sat our kings and

judges to dispense the equitable decisions which our holy law taught them, as though the sight of the ruins of our home would be enough to enkindle rebellion and fierce resistance in the hearts of all Israelites. And thus the helpless mourners were scattered in the various towns and provinces of the Roman empire. They saw around them at first the emblems of heathenism in its glory, and they asked, "When will vengeance come?" They saw the Cæsars glutting their vengeance upon those who merely sought to regain their lost liberty, and they anxiously inquired, "When will this innocent blood be avenged?" They cast their eyes to the East, and there were the Roman eagles. They looked to the North, and there the banners of the Cæsars waved triumphant. They turned their vision to the South, and shouts of victory resounded from the Roman legions, and the West too bowed beneath the yoke of the conquerors. Was ever empire more fortified against adversity than was Rome under Trajan and his immediate successor? You may say that it bore even then within itself the seeds of dissolution! But you can trace them now, because history lies unfolded before you: still had you lived under Hadrian, would you have believed that so soon both the temples of his gods and his empire would vanish from the earth? Where were the captives to look for vengeance on account of the wrong and violence done to them in their own powerless state, when a world was prostrate before its self-styled mistress, the arrogant eternal city? Still vengeance came. At first the war of opinions springing from the diffusion of a new religion gradually sapped the hold which pagan worship had upon the

hearts of many thousands, and at length, in less than two hundred and fifty years after Titus had destroyed Jerusalem a convert of the new system deprived the emperor of his power, and seated himself upon the throne occupied before by the fortunate Augustus, the brave Vespasian, and the wise Antonine. But even this change of religion did not save the Roman empire. Barbarians from the centre of Asia, nations unknown to the destroyers of the temple, rushed out from their distant and obscure homes on the lands where refinement was established, and struck blow after blow upon the mighty colossus whose very greatness had invited them to hold a banquet on his prostrate form, till all that had been taken by the sword was dismembered into numberless fragments, and till the slow acquisitions of many centuries were divided out among many new powers, that arose upon the ruins of the once compact, strong, unassailable Roman state. There is no fiction in this, although it looks almost like a tale of romance, so strange, so wonderful are the vicissitudes we have rapidly sketched; but it proves what I meant to illustrate, how vain it is to judge from outward marks of prosperity of the strength of empires. Indeed we have lived, as an incipient people in the persons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as a people of slaves in the persons of our fathers in Egypt; as a conquering people under Joshua; as a people on the highest point of prosperity and refinement under Solomon; as a people of vassals during the second temple; as a people of wanderers without a home, without a government of our own during the captivity at Babylon and our dispersion since Titus; we have undergone all the changes pos-

sible which any nation can undergo, and still what kingdom has survived, what nation has retained its identity as ours has? Nothing so preserves a people as its laws; and these we have retained, whilst all other systems have changed, and been added to or diminished from, and fallen into corruption or disuse; and those which have perhaps escaped in the march of empire, which means nothing else than the change of power from one family of men to the other, will doubtless sink into the same tomb into which so many have already fallen. The progress downward may be very slow, doubtless it is so; but its ultimate accomplishment is as certain as the laws of nature themselves. And we Israelites, who now wonder why we were destined to bear the contumely of the world, why our religion should be the mark of so many attacks from all sorts of men, as though it were an instrument of evil to all, whether we ourselves profess to be guided by its precepts, or join those who reject it,—may, no, I am wrong in expressing a doubt, we *will* yet live to see our faith, our law, our hopes ruling triumphant over the world. Let mankind buckle on their armour, let them consult together to frustrate the design of the Lord: they cannot, will not succeed, truth will triumph, and with its rule the reign of error will be ended forever.

If this exposition just given proves to us how wickedness in people destroys their power, how truth only can ultimately prevail: it will require but little argument to exhibit a parallel in the case of individuals. Wickedness may flourish for a while; a man may build up his house without justice, and the rafters thereof may be supported by cunning and violence; but this

does not say that his structure will stand, or that peace can dwell within his walls. It is too trite almost to repeat the fact, that our life is limited to a few short years; that whatever we have acquired abides not with us beyond the bounds of the earth, and that death closes up forever all the aspirations after greatness which we have entertained through a long life of worldly success. What then avails all greatness to man when the hour of separation from the earth does arrive? Ay, he leaves his wealth and his name to his family; but can it shield them from the vicissitudes incident to our earthly existence? The most cunning devices have been contrived to perpetuate wealth in families, in countries which obey the will of power. Honours, hereditary in families, have been invented in order to distinguish them from the common mass of mankind. But how does it succeed? The utmost all such laws can do is to confer riches on a single member of the family to the exclusion of all others, who have an equal natural claim upon their common parents; and hence whilst one branch of a so-called noble house lives in affluence, in the enjoyment of wealth, accumulated in the course of ages, others of the same stock are wanderers on the earth, with no other inheritance than an empty name, and perhaps an enfeebled constitution, and a disinclination for labour, as heirlooms from their highly renowned ancestors. Surely such is not a lot to be envied by a thinking man; surely for the acquisition of such baubles it is not worth while to forsake a path which our duty to our God and ourselves points out to us as the road of safety and salvation. Let the proud revel in their superfluity, let the world smile

on them and their race: they are at best but mortal; and soon the cloud of sickness passes over the sunlight of their life; their beautiful landscape becomes hidden from their view; the hold on their prosperity vanishes out of their hands, and they sink into the darkness of the tomb, and no one can say that they have lived well. But let the righteous go to their long home, be they rich or poor, great or humble, it matters not, God has his servants among all classes of men,—let those who live in the Lord depart hence, and how beautiful is the close of their days! They have accumulated other treasures than shining gold and costly pearls; they have left another legacy for their children than empty titles and a patrimony of idleness and extravagance; they have taught them to confide in our Father in all circumstances of life, amidst all vicissitudes or changes of fortune; and they enjoin on them to love justice, truth, and mercy; to practise deeds which the Lord has commanded, which are the guides to salvation: and who will say that this end is not beautiful? who will not for such a future be a servant of God? And the offspring too of such as these have received an example which will aid them through life, even in the acquisition of worldly goods. As they do not attach too high a value to mere animal enjoyments, less will suffice for their support; their wants being limited to the things permitted by religion, they will be saved from that most painful of all feelings, a constant craving for unsatisfied pleasure; and should misfortune overtake them, for no one is exempt from the fate of sorrow which is constantly revolving in life, they will have many who, remembering the piety of their fathers, will hasten

to their relief, to perhaps repay on the children what the parents had bestowed on them. And as no man can well live for himself alone, especially the father of a family, how many incentives has every one thus, whether rich or poor, to secure to himself the esteem of the world, and to his relatives and children the kindness of their fellow-men. Surely this one consideration alone ought to be enough to restrain us from sinning, and to admonish us to beware how we sacrifice our own temporal happiness even, by allowing ourselves to be drawn aside unto the by-paths of sin.

We have thus shown that it is a fallacy to suppose that greatness and happiness are the same thing. But it is also unreasonable to suppose that our virtue prevents our getting along in the world, to use a homely phrase. Herein individuals as well as nations are alike short-sighted, if they suppose this to be the case. If we are indolent, careless, and wasteful, we cannot expect to rise, as men, from the low state in which we find ourselves. It is, indeed, not to be supposed that prosperity always follows on industry; such an idea would remove from Providence his right to bless our labour or withhold his blessing as may seem best in his eyes; but He will not send his blessing to those who will not labour, who, idling away their time and wasting their substance, still expect that some especial miracle should be wrought in their behalf. So also with communities. If they do nothing to improve their condition, if they leave their poor and humble members to become corrupt in ignorance and vice; if the rich and respectable are too proud to associate with the lowly; if they who have mind and

power of speech lie dormant in the defence of their just cause: what right have they to expect anything but oppression and contumely? Now these observations apply in a great degree to our people, as well as to other societies. We do not do enough for those who require our fostering care; we give charity, it is true; but this merely relieves the body; we ought to do more for the spirit, to enlighten and elevate to a higher position those who are unable of themselves to rise; there should be more fraternal feeling among us; the rich and the highly educated should not cast off their lowly brothers, and they whom God has endowed with mind and power of speech should not be tardy to employ their gifts for the benefit of Israel, and think more of the national good than of their own private interests. I do not say that we could by such a course remove the oppression which we suffer in many lands, nor clear off totally the obloquy which attaches to us nearly every where; but this we might do, we could deserve to be freed from these burdens, and who knows but that if we labour, doing our part as honest and true men, God will bless us with eloquence, with persuasiveness, and open the hearts of those in power to our appeals, and obtain for us enlargement from our afflictions. Besides, how much more rational will be such a course in all of us, than for some to complain of the prosperity of their wicked neighbours, and others to shun the society of Israel because we are oppressed, or despair of the fulfilment of the good promised by the prophets, because temporarily "the hand of Edom prevails," and the children of the younger brother are afflicted. Let us abide the issue, and see whether our God will not

keep his promises. As men and as Israelites we may feel the weight of sorrow; but still we can be faithful, true servants in the house of our Father. And both as individuals and as Israelites we have our future; our sorrows will terminate when our warfare is ended, to the man at his death, to the Israelites at the restoration. At both periods will real merit be proved, at both periods will the Lord bring near to Him whomsoever He in his justice declares holy. Long may be the struggle which we have to wage against iniquity within ourselves; many a time may vice appeal to us in seductive tones to follow the seemingly broad path of ruin, which so many travel in apparent enjoyment and the possession of all they desire. But the day at length comes, and it is a day of wrath and mercy, of wrath to the unconverted transgressors, and of mercy to those who are righteous or have returned from sin in Jacob. Justice will be inexorable against and for the high and the low; all will be weighed to show whether they are true servants in our God's sanctuary or not; and then the wicked themselves will discern their own evil deeds; and all will retire from the judgment convinced of the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him who has served God, and him who has not served Him. Righteousness will enter into everlasting bliss, and crime will then expiate its weight of guilt, though all during life prosperity never forsook its victim. And so also it is with the restoration of Israel. Now doubts cross our imagination: "Will indeed these things be?" gentiles deride our hopes, the sinners of our own race do not desire to see their fulfilment. But still the day approaches, slowly, gradually, yet surely: and then

will it be shown who were indeed those whom God had chosen as his people, as those who should have his spirit within them, as those who were to be possessed of the truth divine which is contained in the law. And then, too, will Jerusalem be the glory of all the earth, and nations will flock thither to hear the word of the Lord; and our own anointed, the son of David, will rule meekly and mildly on the earth, to the joy of all the saints, to the glory of all who mourned for Zion, and remained steadfast amidst trials and tribulations. In those days will Judah be saved and Israel dwell securely. Amen.

Nissan 11th. } 5605.
April 18th. }

DISCOURSE V.

THE TRUE WAY.

Father and King of Israel! hear Thou in thy high abode the prayers of thy children in all that they ask of Thee, and let them be blessed with the abundance of that goodness which is the support of all creation. Cause peace to dwell in the midst of them, and let a fraternal love and a union of feeling mark all who claim to be descendants of thy beloved, with whom Thou madest a covenant of everlasting. So many are the favours we have received, that we are unworthy to ask for more; since far exceeding our merits have been the deeds Thou wroughtest for us;

and still whenever thy evident favour seemed to dawn upon us with all its beneficent results, it was our rebellions, our useless contentions, our causeless hatreds that embittered the gifts which were ours, and turned our light into darkness. Aid us, then, O God! with thy spirit of truth, that we may love one another, be obedient altogether, and incite each man his brother to choose the good and to pursue righteousness. How glorious would be Israel's lot if union would prevail among us, if each man would yield his private grievances to the public good. And Thou hast promised, O Father! that at the time of the redemption Thou wouldst remove the heart of stone from our flesh, and give us a heart alive to all that is pure and holy. O be it then thy will now, in our state of dispersion, to fulfil a small portion of the great good announced through thy messengers, and prosper the work of righteousness by which they who love thy name essay to glorify thy memorial. So shall we know that we have been accepted of Thee, seeing that our labour is not in vain, and that thy blessing prospers the work we have undertaken. May this be thy will, O God of truth! Amen.

Brethren!

We have heard much of late years of synagogue reform, and the necessity which exists of remodelling our liturgy, by curtailing its supposed undue length, and introducing more sightly customs in our places of worship; and this outcry has been urged forward with such persevering energy by the lovers of mere change, that even many of those, who at one time opposed all change, are induced to think that there

is something worthy of note in the clamour of the discontented. But what do we really need in our religious affairs? is it a constant agitation from within or oppression from without, on the one side, or is it, on the other, more beneficial to be at peace internally and externally, and to consolidate the advantages which our position confers on us? Some of us indeed have thought that oppression was a good thing for us, that it taught us to rely the more firmly on divine Providence for protection, and that with its removal has commenced a new course of action diametrically opposed to a consistently religious life. Others again hold that peace within is but another term for a sleepy inaction, which wastes the precious hours without producing any thing useful towards the public good. Therefore both these classes, but chiefly the latter, do not seek peace, it is an element of too quiet a nature, it is a state in which they cannot rise to the surface; for to rise quietly and slowly is a task for the great minds, whom the Lord occasionally raises up to elevate the condition of mankind; whereas little souls can best be felt when they are busy, noisefully, and presumptuously in crying out over the corruption of existing customs and laws, and when they censure all those who are far above them in learning, virtue, and general usefulness. I do not mean to say, that even such as these may not have their useful points; the meanest reptile is of service in some way or the other; and why not they? But it is surely no great proof of goodness of heart, or of public spirit, or of a high degree of enlightenment, to find fault with every custom which has come down to us from our predecessors, and to substitute at once, without much reflec-

tion, and without the slightest necessity, such views and forms as originated perhaps with one unworthy of confidence, and have nothing better to recommend them than their newness. New things, it is true, may be very good, they may far exceed in shape or value what is old; but this does not say that every thing ancient is foolish, ugly, or injurious, and that we cannot be too quick in abolishing it. Let us take a retrospective view at our ancients, and we shall then be better able to appreciate their characters and motives. That they had among them ambitious men who sought to rise above their fellows, or some who were insincere in their professions, we will not deny, though the number must be exceedingly small; but if we take them as a mass, we shall find them meek, humble, and sincere. People of our day may perhaps imagine that it is a pleasant thing to be at the head of a religious establishment, where a comfortable support is provided for the incumbent, and where the respect and good-will of his constituents accompany him through life. To a certainty, indeed, there is a great deal more show of happiness in any such position than its reality; but let this pass, and come back to the times of our teachers, and then let us ask, "What had they from the people?" Literally nothing except the respect and confidence from those who sought their instruction, while from the world without they reaped scorn and contumely, and they were not unfrequently exposed to all the hardships and persecutions which the followers of the Jewish faith in a minor, and its teachers in a greater degree received as their boon from hostile creeds. Whoever, we will add, is acquainted with the situation of the

greater number of our religious teachers, as it was even fifty years ago every where, with the exception of a few large cities, and with what it is now in almost every country town and many of the more populous places, must acknowledge that, as far as reward is concerned, they have been and are the most ill-paid class of professional men in the world, have more duties to perform than any other, and have as little power, either granted actually or conceded by courtesy, as can well be imagined. Many of those of former ages were, and many of the present generation are men, who, had they thought fit to qualify themselves for other pursuits, could have risen in them to wealth and distinction with not half the labour they now perform in obscurity and indigence, while teaching the word of God as they have received it; and yet their character was formerly, and is now in most cases, that of confiding honesty and of an indomitable perseverance to fulfil the duties that are demanded of them. Understand well, that I do not say this to advocate any useless imposition which may have been enforced, nor do I mean to say, that poverty and a lowly station may not be a concomitant of the most towering ambition; many a proud heart beats under the monk's cowl, and cloistered recluses reach after the dominion of the world; they who call themselves "servants of the servants of the Lord" have dethroned kings and pronounced the anathema over empires, have bidden armies march on distant expeditions, and entered by their emissaries the bedchambers of the highest and lowest. Such can be, and such is, I know well enough, clerical ambition and pontifical love of power; but this does not say

that all who profess themselves servants of religion are therefore to be distrusted; because a dominant church can transgress after this manner, it is not to be inferred that those who wish to lead the few who dissent from such a church are equally ambitious in a small way, to have their followers look up to them right or wrong, and obey their directions without inquiry. No doubt you might point out some such who wish to be obeyed as though it were a spirit who spoke out of them; but we hazard little in averring that, as a class, the teachers of Israel are not chargeable with any such irreligious assumption of superiority over the congregation of the Lord. Only look over the pages of history where it deigns to dwell for a brief space upon the wrongs we had to endure: and where were our teachers? in power? in wealth? They were never in such a position. Moses to a certainty was the leader, spiritual as well as political, of the people; but after his decease we seldom find the *priest* in power. We pass over the turbulent times of the Judges, of which but few notices have come down to us, though these tell us how much religion was neglected in many places of Israel; but from the commencement of the kingdom under Saul we always find, that the religious part of our polity had to succumb unduly to the political chiefs during the entire duration of the first temple. Here and there we behold the priest or prophet mingling in the affairs of the state; but we must consider that both priest and prophet were citizens of Israel, and as such had an undoubted right to take their part in the contests which occasionally arose, and in which from their position, talents, and national influence they were most able to

act understandingly and with proper emphasis. And as we descend from the first to the second temple, we shall be struck with the remarkable fact, that the men in power in Judæa uniformly almost hated the teachers of religion, and that many of the latter fell victims to the bad passions of the former. During the captivity, what have they not endured; if the humbler followers of Judaism were despised and spurned, its teachers were singled out for persecution; for strange though it may appear, history nevertheless together with our experience instructs us, that there has always been the greatest desire manifested by all sorts of men, the heathen, the infidel, the Nazarene, and Mahomedan, to lure away our members from our communion, and therefore those who could lead the people have always been looked upon with especial suspicion. Nothing can be alleged with truth against the peacefulness of our system; our people have always been obedient to the laws of the land. I speak of them as a class, even when oppressed; they are sober and industrious, few of them are given to extravagance and low pursuits; they may be freely called a moral people nearly wherever they are found: and yet it seems that the world has almost ever had a deep interest in destroying these "few men of Israel, this worm of Jacob." It required no deep sagacity in the rulers of former ages to point out the Rabbis as a great stumbling-block in the way of a general conversion of Israel; their integrity, their humility, their irreproachable life, together with their learning, were sufficiently known and appreciated to mark them as the enemies of the popular creed; hence it is nowise wonderful that in ages, when every means was considered just-

ifiable which increased the power of the church, Jewish teachers were peculiarly selected as objects of vengeance, and their books considered as instruments which successfully opposed the expected extension of the power of the church over the handful of Israelites. Whenever therefore opportunity offered, the Rabbis were banished, they were not allowed to teach religion without personal danger, and their books, which were even more dreaded than their personal presence, were destroyed in incredible numbers, at times when every thing had to be copied with the pen, before the invention of printing; and if I recollect rightly, twenty thousand different volumes were destroyed at one time at Avignon, or some other Catholic capital, and this operation of destroying Jewish books was repeated several times with all due solemnity in the presence of the clerical tyrants. How our enemies succeeded in injuring us need not be told; for they did their work so well that but little which is certain in our history during many centuries can now be found after the closest research. It almost appears as though we suffered every thing which is wicked and cruel, and that our sorrows have been mocked by the addition of utter forgetfulness which has been cast over them. Only fragments of a history of the Jews are attainable, the mass of incidents which occurred will probably always remain unknown, till a prophet again arises to paint the events of his people with the unfading colours which adorn the books of sacred Writ.

At present, we acknowledge, there is no such danger attending our teachers or their works; but for all that there is a danger of even a greater kind which

now threatens us. It is the rage enkindled in some places for change, and the concomitant disrespect with which the legacy of our fathers is spoken of. Were it that the contest remained confined to our own members, we might perhaps hope of soon settling the differences which have unfortunately arisen; but our old opponents also take part in the disunion, and uniformly rejoice when they see a chance of a hope for the introduction of their views into our councils, and assert, and no doubt believe, that modern reform is a deviation from Judaism and an approximation to their doctrines. Hence they applaud every sort of division which is met with; they glory over the disrespect with which schismatics regard the Rabbis, and by insinuations at least, encourage as more rational and less bigoted and inaccessible the modern breakers down of the fences of Judaism, above those who regard as sacred the ancient landmarks, and love to see Israel as it was, and as it should be, one in faith, one in deeds, one in prayer, and one in hope of a future restoration. I do not mean to insinuate that our reformers are less attached to the fundamental principles of Judaism, the belief in the unity of God, than we are, or that they have thus far given the Nazarenes much cause for supposing that they are nearer their standard, than they were before they joined the assault upon the Rabbis, nor that they are in the least indoctrinated with the belief in a plurality in the godhead: I only say, that our former persecutors rejoice in the establishment of reform synagogues, and openly assert that thus Jews are approaching some of the many sects which surround them. And of a truth, it must be acknowledged,

that apostacies properly so-called, or voluntary desertions of the Jewish household for the union with any other church, have for some quarter of a century been more frequent than before; since during persecution the weak of faith left us, because they could not endure the sufferings which we had to encounter, or expose themselves to the death by the hands of the executioner which awaited the faithful in Israel. We may well ask: "Why is this so?" The answer is easily enough given. The adherence to our faith, from a childlike confiding trust, has been weakened by the occurrences of the age; the name of Israelite is in many countries a bar to public preferment, and there are many who eat rather the bread of infamy as apostates, provided the many smile on them, than live by their own labour which they would have to do as Jews. It matters not what the boon is, whether it be employment in the cabinet, on the bench, in the army, in the church, or in the more humble way of pensioned mechanic, or public underling, so it is *something* which is obtained as the price of a barter of religion; and hence those who feel no conviction in their faith, whose mind is bewildered by the speculations of a vain philosophy, forsake us and join themselves to wheresoever their interest leads. It is to my view an indifference to religion altogether, the fruit of the agitation and unsettling of the mind of the people, which leads to apostacy; and thus, however unworthy the motives which have produced the conversions, the converts themselves will insist upon their having changed from grounds of conviction and attachment to their new belief, and will express a hateful sympathy for "their brethren according to

the flesh," as though they were suffering from mental blindness, and the road of salvation were closed to them. It may be, that some of these converts are sincere; the human mind is a strange compound, and some persons may thus be convinced of the truth of a proposition which to another appears as the most absurd and inconceivable. So may the priests of Egypt have been sincere in their worship of animals, so may the Brahmins be convinced of the great sin of killing one of their consecrated bulls. I do not say that one or the other deceives his new associates; though this is doubtless so in the vast majority of cases; but this we may assert, that the greater portion are of those whose religious conduct was loose, and who have not been religiously and strictly educated by their parents. One thing must be added in this connexion: though the number of apostates is, alas! too great for the glory of Israel, they are not so numerous as it is occasionally asserted; but even if it were, it would only be amounting to this, that those unworthy of the name of Israel were gradually leaving our ranks to join themselves to those whose religion allows them more liberty of action, and places them upon an equality with the majority of the inhabitants of their respective countries. So far however as past experience shows, the numbers of Israel are not likely to diminish by any of the steps taken to inveigle away those who are willing to leave us; and as for these unfortunates, whatever they may allege for themselves, they certainly cannot claim to be disinterested, whilst they occupy positions which as Jews would have been inaccessible to them

But we do not mean to discuss the subject of apostacies, and it is only incidentally that I alluded to it. It is to the unsettling of principles occasioned by the factious censure of all that is ancient that I wished to call your attention. In good olden days there was a uniformity of conduct among all Israelites in all essential points of action. There may have been speculative differences (for we do not fetter the reason) entertained by many who still acted all alike; but the difference went no farther than thinking, and for thought we are responsible to God alone. But when you were in a Jewish community, there was no one who did not observe the duties relating to the person, who neglected his prayers at the stated times, who profaned the Sabbath, or who would defile himself by the presence in his house of aught that is prohibited to us in the law. In modern times we have seen a woful change produced in all this. Many observe none of the personal duties, neither Tephillin nor Mezuzah are in their houses; the times of prayer pass without thought on the Creator; the meal is devoured, but they say not "Blessed be the Giver of this bread, blessed be He who gives us food;" the Sabbath is to them a day of labour, the festivals are seasons for acquiring wealth; and their household is defiled by the presence of food prohibited by the law of Moses, and they seek not for sanctity by separating themselves from things unclean by the Lord's command. I could easily extend the catalogue of modern transgressions, but it is needless to do more than call your attention to what all of you know as well as I can tell them; and in a word, modern days have given us ample reason to deplore, that Judaism is with many but the

shadow of a once great reality, the memory of a thing that once has been. To what is this deterioration owing? To nothing but the disrespect which has been thrown upon our traditions. It may be that a hundred years ago observances were uselessly multiplied: but how does this excuse the laxity which has crept in? is this the way rational men should act? And what is it that is proposed as the remedy for all the evils of the time? In a word, "Synagogue reform!" "The Sabbath is profaned," say our moderns, "let us go to synagogue at a later hour than our customs require, it will cause many to attend who now spend their mornings in business and their afternoons in looking after their affairs!" Do you see a disregard of domestic duties? "Let us shorten the prayers, it will induce some to visit the house of God who now find the time they have to remain too long." The reform, you see, is to reach the Synagogue, when the people require a restoration of the piety of their forefathers. But little change indeed is needed, except the change of heart, which is at last the only thing which can reproduce the ancient conformity. Look at those who are yet imbued with the old spirit, and see what religion is to them. It burns in their souls with an intense brightness which illuminates all their life. What is it to them that they are poor? that the tyrants of the earth oppress them? that the ills of life lie heavily on their shoulders? They have their faith firmly entwined with the chords of their existence; they feel their God in every moment that they spend on the earth; and if their religion is but left to them, they can hear the storm howl undismayed, and they can bear its pitiless blast without murmuring or re-

pining; for their God is their support. Now look upon our modern fashionable Judaism, which finds all its glory in being so much like the gentile system, which requires the synagogue to be simply an imitation of a church, with only some few modifications in the words of the prayers to make it a little varying from the Unitarian mode of worship: and what does it produce? Irreligious men, cold thinkers, those dead to faith, indifferent to every Jewish hope. Those are produced in its bosom, who do not hope for the restoration of our national glory, who deem it treason to the state to look for the coming of the Messiah: when in truth this hope nowise interferes with our duties toward the country of which we are citizens or subjects, and of which we are an integral portion whilst we live under its protection. But to hear one of the new adventurers in religious experiment, and to listen to his declamation about the necessity of Israelites becoming good citizens, and his renouncing any special good for his people as a nation, it were enough to make the uninformed think that ancient Judaism is inimical to the state. But our reformers must know that they are dealing with shadows; Judaism, messianic Judaism I speak of, that which thinks all that we see a forerunner of great and glorious events, is the religion of peace to all mankind; the Rabbis teach "The law of the country is law," and a great leader among us told his sons among other matters as his dying injunctions, "Do not avoid paying the public imposts." These two instances, if no more even could be found in all our writings, would be enough to demonstrate what the rabbinists considered as the duty of Israel to the state; and

hence that a belief in the dogmas of our church as we have received them, is in no manner clashing with the duties we owe to the countries of our birth and adoption. Not he is a true Israelite who is a traitor to the country that gives him shelter and protection; not he is a true son of Jacob who does not pray for the welfare and peace of the place where he rears his offspring, and where repose the bones of his parents who have gone home to their Father in heaven. At the same time is he a craven who, for the sake of flattering a gentile monarch, or to please a gentile popular assembly, stoops to the base falsehood to say that there is no Messiah for Israel, that Germany, or France, or England, or America, is the Israelite's permanent home. Gladly would we be free every where where our God lets his sun shine to us by day and the moon by night; but sooner than for such a boon deny what is our faith, what the prophets predict, and what Moses teaches, sooner than to be such traitors, let us hug the chain which oppression would cast around us; for it would be honourable, far more glorious than the badge of office, or the marshal's baton which a treason to our religion could bring us. Our fathers did not deny their religion when they were daily threatened with confiscation of property, with expulsion from their homes, and with a violent death, because that they practised the duties of their religion. And is this the manner that we are to prove our modern enlightenment,—the fruit of our greater freedom, that we are to be as different as possible from what they were? If they honoured the house of God by an earnest devotion while there, must we go only thither to be amused? to be there for fine

singing, sweet music, or a powerful sermon? If they strained every nerve to become familiar with the sacred tongue, must we cast off this ancient treasure, in order to pray in the tongues of many countries as the gentiles do around us? If they sacrificed all the pleasures of life, to live safely alone, in communion with those of their own faith and hopes, merely not to transgress against the Bible, and to eat only what is permitted to us: are we now to enlarge the bounds of liberty, simply to sit down to table with those not bound by our rules and partake of what is permitted to them, though denied to us? If our fathers lived sparingly and submitted to every inconvenience, only that they might, though poor and afflicted, return to their happy homes on the sixth day's evening to welcome the Sabbath, and to be able to prepare in season for the blessed Passover a due reception of the annual visitant; if the Day of Atonement was to them a season of renewal of friendship and mutual forgiveness of injuries: are we now to change all this? to make the Sabbath a day for gain or pleasure, the Passover a season to be neglected, and the Day of Atonement only as a break in the chain of our iniquity, to be resumed when the fast is over? And suppose with such acting the desired synagogue-reform were forced upon us, what, I ask you, would religion have gained? what then has been or can be done for Judaism? No, brethren, the Synagogue is well enough, we only require a different spirit; the reform should commence in our breasts, and prove itself as pervading our every thought and feeling; for we should remember what the Prophet (Ezekiel xx. 12, 13) teaches:

ואתן להם את חקתי ואת משפטי הודעתי אותם
אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם: וגם את שבתותי
נתתי להם להיות לאות ביני וביניהם לדעת כי אני
ה' מקדשם: יחז' כ' יא' יב':

"And I gave them my statutes, and my judgments I made known to them which a man is to do to live in them. And also my Sabbaths I gave to them, that they might be a sign between me and them, and that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifieth them."

This is the object of our religion, to sanctify us in the sight of God, not to make us appear acceptable in the sight of men. I leave it to yourselves to say which system is best calculated to effect this; whether the modern dereliction which removes us by slow, though sure degrees, from the obligation which we owe to God, or the ancient conformity which finds nothing worth pursuing unless it leads us to the presence of our Maker in the spirit of truth. Both ways are before you, and that which you upon reflection will doubtless discover as the truth, even that pursue in the full conviction that in this manner you are best securing for yourselves the good-will of your fellowmen and earning the favour of the Lord of hosts, which is a light to everlasting. Amen

Iyar 2d. } 5605.
May 9th. }

DISCOURSE VI.

ISRAEL IN EXILE.

O Thou who art, and hast been, and wilt be! we know Thee to be of unending days and of infinite goodness. It is Thou who givest breath to all the living, and thy spirit dwells in man, since Thou didst form him in thy image, and implant in him the breath of life. How glorious art Thou in thy work! how exalted in thy government! and every one of thy deeds proclaims Thee God and King. How shall we then approach thy presence? how render ourselves worthy of thy protection? Are we to come with thousands of sacrifices, with myriads of streams of oil? But verily our holy courts are desolate, and our altar is levelled to the ground, and our priests are wanderers from the limits of the sanctuary. But Thou didst teach us to rely on thy mercy, not on our righteousness; to come with humility into thy courts, rather than with magnificent gifts brought in sinful pride. Teach us, then, O Father! to feel thy presence within our hearts, that our thoughts may not rise up in self-glorification, which seeks its own importance, not the welfare of thy kingdom; and that we may be subdued in soul because of our iniquities, and seek thy favour by contrition and repentance, which reopen for the sinner the portals of everlasting bliss. And in this manner shall we be acceptable before Thee,

and our salvation will spring forth as the morning, and thy glory will be revealed over us. Do this, O God! because Thou art good and merciful, and because Thou hast sworn that Thou wouldst never cast off Israel. So shall we live in thy fear, and ascend unto thy presence. Amen.

Brethren!

In the prophecy of Hosea we read as follows:

והיה מספר בני ישראל כחול הים אשר לא ימד
ולא יספר והיה במקום אשר יאמר להם לא עמי אתם
יאמר להם בני אל חי: הושע ב' א':

"And the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, instead of its being wont to be said unto them, You are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are children of the living God." Hosea ii. 1 (English version i. 10).

If any argument were required to prove that the prophets spoke and could speak through divine inspiration only, the verse from our to-day's Haphtorah, which I have just read, would amply demonstrate it. Observe only, when this prophecy was uttered. The superscription of the book of Hosea is in these words: "The word of the Lord which was unto Hosea, son of Beëri in the days of Uzziah, Yotham, Achaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboäm, son of Joäsh, king of Israel." Four of these kings, that is, all with the exception of Achaz, may be called the restorers of the glory of Israel, for a brief period it is true, but still restorers of the national glory before its final extinction. It matters not to us where

Hosea lived, whether in the kingdom of Judah or Israel; enough, his words bear the impress of divine authority, and as such we stop not to discuss secondary considerations, which are the province of criticism, not matters for religious contemplation. We therefore, without farther preface, will elucidate the time of his prophecy. In the days of Hosea there was but one people known to civilization which claimed emphatically the title of the people of God. There were, it is true, elements of destruction at work, to overthrow the structure of Israel's prowess; but the nation had under the Judges and during the disastrous reigns of weak and mischievous princes passed through apparently severer dangers without being consumed. It was therefore an event not very probable within a reasonable period, to look forward to the complete overthrow of both Judah and Israel, nor would we have been led to predict from mere rational grounds, should this occur, the permanence of the scattered remnants among the nations as an entire homogeneous mass, distinguished by descent, physiognomy and belief, as the Hebrews have proved themselves. Let us not forget that, when Jeroboäm the second wielded the government of Samaria, the boundaries of Palestine were if anything enlarged through the success of his arms; for idolater as he was, the Lord had compassion on his people, and by giving them victory against their enemies he granted them means of repentance, that they might again become worthy of his love and protection. During this time of apparent success, the spirit of prophecy animated the eloquent soul of Isaiah, and other seërs of futurity; they beheld the avenging rod stretched out

over Jerusalem and Samaria; the plains of Jordan appeared to them strewed with bloody corpses of slain sons of Israel, and the valley of Jezreël the resting-place of many a warrior whose gory head was laid low in the useless struggle against the conquering foeman. But more yet, they saw, beyond this gloomy picture, a time of a brilliant future, when the plains of Jordan should be filled once more with happy husbandmen tilling their again fruitful soil; they beheld in spirit the valley of Jezreël crowded with bleating flocks, with lowing herds, and the peaceful shepherds following their pleasant occupation, singing songs of thanksgiving unto the Merciful One who has remembered his people. But between these periods, the one of destruction, the other of renewed happiness, they saw and foretold a long series of sorrows, of many changes, of but few joys as the lot of their brethren, yet all tending to one point, the permanence of the sons of Israel as one nation, as a people consecrated to the upholding of the blessed religion which had its birth in the thunders and lightnings of the sacred Sinai. They themselves were devoted servants to its behests, it was to them the light of life, the breath of their nostrils; they felt sorely the degeneracy of their times, they were indignant that those of their own people should exchange the sweet yoke of religion for the unbridled license of idolatry. And because they felt so, the Lord in his wisdom chose them in order to impart his spirit to their minds, that they might go forth and speak the direful message of Israel's destruction, in the name of Israel's God. Had the men of those times listened, had they felt indeed their unworthiness, had they re-

pented with sincerity and abhorred their own deeds: the temple would not have been given up to the flames, sulphur and salt would not have destroyed the smiling fertility of the land, and Israel would have been united long ere this under the benignant rule of the glorious son of David whom we hope for, whose coming we delay by our continued iniquity. But you know how unsuccessful were the prophets; they spoke early and late, in Samaria and Jerusalem, in the city and the field, in the temple and to the private ear of the rulers; but the people believed not the words of the divine messengers who spoke to them, or they believed that the temple of the Lord, the house in which the Glory dwelt would protect itself from destruction, and in its shadow shield the people who, though given to apostacy, yet prided themselves upon the holy house on Moriah. But as they would not listen, what had the Glory to dwell for among them? Since they refused to obey the law of which the temple was but the outward sign, what use was there for the mere structure, elegant as it was, and the numerous sacrifices which filled the avenues of the altar? The spirit which consecrated the house had fled from the people, the good intentions which rendered the offerings an agreeable savour were not any longer in Israel. The building already mourned the departure of the divine Presence, the altar already wept because the smoke of incense no longer was accepted on High: and what then did the enemy accomplish with his battering-rams and his fire, but remove what had become a useless incumbrance on the earth? The building was nothing, the sacrifices were nothing, the spirit of God was not in

them, and they ceased to be, not forever, but until the time that the renewed obedience of the people would recall among them the spirit of the Lord's favour, which their transgression had banished from their sanctuary and their state.

But you will easily understand that all this punishment was not a virtual declaration that the *faith* of Israel was an abhorrence to God, or that the law which He had revealed had ceased to be pleasing in his eyes; on the contrary, it proved that so great was the value of this in the divine Mind, that the very people with whom He had made an everlasting covenant could not remain on the earth as a uniform nation, blessed with all the prerogative of national independence, whilst they disobeyed the commandments which this covenant asked of them to follow, in their conduct toward their Creator and their intercourse with each other. But to look at the punishment itself which was meted out, an uninstructed spectator could not have believed that it was not an extermination. Look at the Mosaic polity, it speaks of sacrifices, of atonement through the sprinkling of blood on the corners of the altar; it speaks of an order of priesthood; of Levites to serve in the temple; of public proclamation of seasons of solemn pilgrimage to the capital city of a happy and peaceful land; of judges and officers of justice who were to administer the law as it was handed down to them from their intelligent ancestors. Such was indeed the tendency of the law which we had received: moreover its object was to restrict us in our intercourse with the nations of the earth, and it encouraged therefore on the one side a strictly agricultural

life, and threw many obstacles in the way of a successful prosecution of commercial enterprises. But the dispersion consequent on the conquest of Jerusalem, especially the second overthrow which we experienced when Titus led against us the conquering eagle-legions of Rome, changed the whole system under which we had lived, while the Mosaic constitution was the supreme law of Palestine. The sacrificial scheme and civil code were swept off at once; there was barely a vestige left of the priesthood, and scarcely a trace of the judicial power. Henceforward no one that had sinned could bring an offering as an atonement to the altar; for there was no place in which sacrifices could be accepted. Henceforward no Israelite, except by sufferance of the gentile governments, could appeal for redress to the equitable laws which formerly secured to every man his liberty, his life, and the pursuit of such an occupation as seemed best to him. The pursuit of agriculture, erst the chief business of Israel, became henceforth one from which we were excluded by the decrees of tyrannical rulers. The Jew in most places could not own any landed property, and the following of a mechanical trade as a means of livelihood was interdicted to him as a calling which was reserved for those of a nobler and higher standing, that is, all the various nations amongst whom we were compelled to sojourn. The consequence was that traffic in its various ramifications was nearly the sole means left us, as the only task to which we could apply ourselves to obtain bread and raiment. It is no wonder that, where so many were engaged in the same pursuit, all could not be merchants properly so called, and that where

there was no scope for the development of a high character for honour and integrity, there should at length be produced a covetous disposition, almost innate, which showed itself in a paltry love of gain, and an irresistible desire to acquire wealth by all sorts of means. If you insult a man from day to day, and give him no opportunity of redress, he must be of a strong mind, indeed, if you do not succeed at length to break down his spirit and make him look upon himself as inferior to you, his tyrant. That nation indeed is yet to be born, which could sustain for ages contumely, scorn, and deprivation of every sort, without acquiring at length a character where the noble sentiments of our nature are choked up by low desires, and by a striving to overcome by secrecy and stealth those against whom all open action is impracticable. This is the experience of the world; and still how nobly has our race overcome and outlived these and many other difficulties which it is needless to enumerate. We have indeed been brought to a sore trial, and our religion has been exposed to the corrupting influence of an epicurean philosophy, and of a splendid and showy worship, among those who overthrew the Roman empire, and superintended by the hierarch who succeeded to the palace though not to the name of the Cæsars. On the one hand liberty, enjoyment, power, and pleasure were offered to us, if we would but quit the pale of Judaism and embrace whatever opinions our masters happened to profess: on the other we were threatened with all the hardships which poverty can inflict, with all the tortures which a blind bigotry can invent to crush those who oppose its progress. We can well imagine

how great a struggle must have taken place in the minds of many, who felt themselves possessed of all the capacities which ennoble the soul and enable a man to rise in the scale of society, and to distinguish himself above his fellows. Nor need it surprise us to learn that many did fall off, either to heathenism, to the Koran, or the Nazarene creed, in order to obtain this advantage, and that many, such as did not feel the overpowering importance of religion above all other considerations, yielded themselves to the persuasions of the tempters, which they had not moral courage enough to resist.

The prophets foresaw this as a necessary consequence of the dispersion which they threatened during the prosperous reign of wickedness in Palestine. They saw the people scattered like the dew of heaven over all lands: yet they felt assured that the masses would never yield themselves to the allurements of the world. They saw the whole tenor of the Mosaic polity subverted so far as outward symbols, structure and government are concerned. They felt that such a fate befalling any other system would be its certain destruction, it could not survive were all that constituted its greatness for its professors, and its glory in the eyes of others, totally destroyed. Yet they feared not that extinction would result to Israel and to the law in the name of which they spoke. But they foresaw and foretold that both the people and the law should survive, and that all the world should in vain use the mightiest efforts to exterminate the one and to efface the other. And how well this has been accomplished, history will tell you, if you diligently search for truth. Scarcely had the temple been level-

led to the ground, not yet were the embers quenched of the consumed furniture of the house of God, not yet had the blood ceased from smoking which was shed by the defenders of the sanctuary around the sacred altar, when a new spirit seemed all of a sudden to animate the captives, as they turned their back upon the seat of their former glory. They now felt convinced that the essence of their faith was a principle, not confined within walls and space, but reaching to the utmost bounds of the universe. They were convinced that, since the temple did not preserve their fathers from backsliding, there is a means of salvation independent of the appurtenances attending on the splendid worship in the temple on Moriah, much as this might be calculated to aid the heart in attaining a high degree of devotion, and much as it had been calculated to inspire with awe and reverence the countless crowds that sought three times annually its precious courts. A spirit of prayer and devotion was poured out over the people, a spirit of inquiry in the things which God had commanded, and the pure souls among them wrestled in fasting and devotion with the sinfulness of their nature, and entreated without ceasing the One who had punished them to visit his people with his mercy, and to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. And when the calamities thickened; when all that rendered life joyful was snatched from them; when the very possession of their religion was made the doom of their condemnation; when they were offered all that man calls great only to say the word which should join them to new gods: they felt themselves animated with the courage of martyrs and witnesses of the truth, and they followed the path

of death in all its horrors, as though they were led forth to a joyous festival; live they could not as beseemed men and Israelites; but die they could as the Lord demands of his servants, and when their spirit took wing to realms of bliss, they gloried in the happy lot that had been assigned to them, to live in such a manner that they could sanctify their Maker's name by their yielding their all in his service. And though thus many perished, though thus many wandered into banishment bereft of the wealth for the sake of which their persecutors kindled the stake, or sharpened their swords: the example of the blessed martyrs was not lost upon the survivors, and notwithstanding so many were slain, or died a miserable lingering death from thirst, and hunger, and all the dangers incidental to a forced wandering into exile, it appeared almost as though new confessors sprung from the blood of the precious saints which saturated the ground; and thus despite of all the wounds which our enemies had struck us, they did not succeed in slaying all the witnesses of the UNITY of God, and all the servants of the Lord of hosts. Ah! how the adversaries of truth combined! they called themselves the newly chosen, and the children of the bond-woman placed themselves in spiritual grace above those of Abraham's chosen wife; and from Spain, and from Britain, from India and the empire of the Osmans arose the outcry of the faithful who perished in their faith. And still the counsels of the wicked have been in vain, and Israel survives,—yea, it survives, and will exist despite of all the dangers that threaten us, either through open violence or through the corrupting influence of the smiles of a deceitful world, which ensnares one by

one those who love to revel in things forbidden to the true follower of the law of Moses, or who prefer the bribes which apostacy at times receives as its portion from vain-glorious rulers, or who cannot resist the temptation to mingle in marriage with the stranger to our race,—to all those in brief, whose conviction is not of that firm kind which impelled the martyrs of old to let their blood dye the scaffold, sooner than they would say or do aught which could be construed into an admission of their having denied the blessed doctrine of the Unity of God in their heart.

Now, whoever observes the course of things, cannot help discovering by the light which experience throws upon the history of the world, and the hope which inspired prophecy breathes into the believing heart, that no matter how long the struggle may last, the truth will ultimately triumph over error of whatever kind, and that the testimony borne by so many great and noble souls will not be thrown away in the course of events. Now, indeed the presumption of gentiles is as it ever was: they call themselves "the elect," and they glory in the vain supposition that a new light has dawned upon them, and that they, who formerly walked in the light of the Lord, have been altogether rejected from the favour of Him who made a covenant of everlasting mercy to Abraham. All our sorrows are well known to the world; the ancient oppressors cannot hide it from themselves that their hands are gory with innocent blood, that their soil is stained by the murder of those who had done no evil, who lived in meekness and truth as humble servants of the Lord of hosts. Yet now instead of repenting them of their crimes, although it is true

they affect an abhorrence for them, they band together, instead of respecting the constancy which they cannot avoid acknowledging to exist, to induce us by persuasion to throw aside the mantle of faith which we have worn in the storm of adversity, and to shelter ourselves in the shadow of their tottering domicil. We are taunted with the oft-repeated assertion that we are not God's people, that we have rejected the means of grace extended to us, and that for this sin we are stricken with mental blindness, in which we grope about as one bereft of his eyes, without knowing whither to turn. But Thou, O Father! knowest our spirit! we have sinned against Thee on many occasions, we have broken thy covenant, and slain thy prophets who admonished us in thy name. For all this, Thou art our God, and, by thy grace upheld, we never were without those who sanctified thy Name, and loved to seal their trust in Thee with the soul Thou hadst given them. And art Thou not the same as from the beginning? the sole Creator, the only God, the One Saviour, who was, who is, and who will be?

And still, brethren, we are asked in the name of this Being who never deceives, who promises only to fulfil;—in his name we are asked to forsake the law which He has given us, and to join ourselves to the nations who follow a standard far varying from that which our Father unfurled on Sinai! "This is not the way," say to us the men of the world, "This is not the city of refuge," say the men of the age, "whither you are to resort to seek safety and protection." But which then is the road we are to travel? To this a thousand answer clamorously that they are

in possession of the secret of salvation; and when asked "What is it?" they exhibit a system of belief foreign to revelation, a course of conduct antagonizing to the law which we have received. Not a single moral principle applicable to life has been invented since our law was given, and the new theory of salvation is nothing but a system of ideas, none requiring any act demanded by our law, but many involving principles which are against the fundamental idea of the Mosaic code, One God, One Creator, One Saviour. The world may have, nay has, grown wiser in discoveries, in refinement, and the elegancies of life; but in moral principles, and in the true conception of the Deity, we are precisely as when our shepherd patriarchs fed their flocks in the plains of the Jordan, or by the banks of the Euphrates. God is the same as when He revealed himself to Abraham, and his being is precisely what it was when He appeared to Jacob on his way to Egypt, and announced himself as the God of his fathers.

But it need not surprise us that the world will not admit our claim to be a people favoured by God; our visage is marred by many vicissitudes, our body is covered by sore bruises which we have been struck by those who profess to labour for the salvation of our souls; and the march of wisdom has not been as yet rapid enough to obliterate all the false ideas concerning the Creator which erring man adopted previous to the announcement from Horeb, "I am the Eternal, thy God;—thou shalt have no other gods before me." But the struggle will not be forever: see how many strides mind has made in the discovery of the secret which is the foundation of the world;

and as sure as there is a sun in heaven, the day will come when the cry of Israel, "*Adonay Echad*," the Lord is one, will be echoed from pole to pole, and from sea to sea, when all men will be in truth a nation of brothers, a people of the Lord, the perfection of creation, created anew in the spiritual image of their Father.

In the meantime, however, we need not fear that the seed of Jacob will become extinct. If what we have endured could not exterminate us, if the fierce war within Jerusalem by the factions which strove for mastery within the beleaguered city, aided by the devastation of the enemy's sword without, followed as this was for centuries by cruelties at which tigers would revolt had they a soul to feel, has failed to annihilate us: we have well-founded hopes that nothing will hereafter occur to do us more injury, than the events of our past history. And if even many will not abide the coming of the redeemer, there will be immense masses who will wait till he comes and restores the crown of our head in all its ancient splendour. During this interval, however, many dangers will assail us; the Lord will purify his people, and select from it all those who are unworthy of the name of Israel; He wishes not for slothful servants, and they, who love not the law, will thus be banished from the communion of the faithful. But with all this dereliction, "The number of the sons of Israel will be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered, and it shall come to pass that, instead of its being said to them, You are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are children of the living God." How well has a part of this prediction come

to pass. A portion of those, who in the prophet's days worshipped stocks and stones, have forsaken their idols, the works of their hands, and have in part adopted a religion analogous in its morals to our own. They have accepted as the text of their creed our own holy Bible, and still they entertain ideas of the being of God which we never can and never will share. And in the pride of their heart they aver that we are not God's people any more, that we have refused the new light which has dawned upon them, thereby incurring the wrath due to wilful disobedience. But we are taught of the Lord, our faith is as it always was, a firm reliance upon the word of the only one and eternal God; He cannot change, his being is unalterable. As therefore our neighbours have adopted a portion of our faith, the time will come when the whole force of the truth will bring them to conviction, and then, instead of the contumely which is now heaped on us for our constancy, all will confess that the truth abides with us; and Israel will return to his heritage, and innumerable shall be his descendants; and all nations will exclaim with one voice, "Ye are children of the living God." He is not the god that can die, that can change, that can feel bodily infirmities; no, He is living, permanent, unending, unchangeable, and we are his people, the flock of his pasture; and it will be our happy privilege to lead all mankind to the courts of his holiness.

Remain then faithful, ye sons of Jacob! and if earthly darkness draws around you the veil of sorrow, know that your Redeemer lives on high, and that each of your sufferings is treasured up in his

presence, and that everlasting joy will crown you, when the Lord remembers his people in his mercy and goodness. And may his grace be our shield against sin and transgression. Amen.

Sivan 1st. } 5605.
June 6th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

How great, O Lord! is thy goodness which Thou hast treasured up for those who fear Thee; though they be the humble of the earth, they are the first in thy kingdom; though they be unknown among men, they are those in whom Thou delightest and who live in the book of thy memorial. O let this precious truth be made manifest to our souls, that we may travel undismayed on the path of duty which Thou hast assigned to us,—let the world frown as it may. For what are the favours of man who is buoyant in life to-day, and laid in the cold, dark bosom of the earth on the morrow? What are the frowns of a mortal, whose wrath is scarcely enkindled ere thy messenger of dissolution speeds hither and takes away his spirit unto thy judgment seat? Well do we know that, if Thou wilt protect us against such as these, we need not to regard their favours, we need not to dread their frowns. But prone to err, because we are flesh, we forget to regard thy power, and seek the benefits

of creatures perishable like ourselves; we chime in with them, as though their anger were to be dreaded, and we thus perish forever because we transgress thy blessed will. O do Thou, Father of all! aid us in our attempt to pursue righteousness; render us free from false shame when it concerns thy service; teach us to feel only thy presence in all our walks and deeds: so that we may follow only the path of thy law, heedless whether we are surrounded by those who approve what Thou ordainest, or by those who mock at thy righteousness. And if we see this as the result of our sojourn on earth, how brightly will break for us the morning-dawn which will rise for us in thy kingdom, when the darkness and night of our earthly dissolution shall have passed away, when we appear in thy presence, and see in Thee not the dread impartial Judge, but the benignant Father, whose pleasure is life, and whose approval is length of days of unending bliss. May this be our portion, and the lot of all who call on Thee. Amen.

Brethren!

So many are the dangers which surround us as a nation; so many are the trials we have to pass through, owing to the delinquencies of our own members and the watchful jealousy of the gentiles, that the thought often obtrudes itself upon the most careless thinker: "Will the Jews be able to sustain themselves as a people despite of these adverse circumstances?" The person who is constitutionally timid will, when this query is presented to his mind, doubtless think that all is nearly lost; he will probably argue thus: "In older times there were men and women devoted to their

faith; there were teachers of religion who, though enduring all the miseries of penury and persecution, taught unflinchingly the law of God to the people; and the great body of the Israelites were content to live humbly, unostentatiously, satisfied if the Lord gave them their daily bread, and if they were permitted to worship their God, not in freedom and ease, but without being led to the dungeon or scaffold for the sake of their religious opinions. But now what do we see? The men and women are given to worldliness; the poor envy the rich, and the rich keep aloof from the poor; they who are not wealthy often endeavour to acquire riches suddenly at the expense of honesty and fair-dealing; and they who are blessed with all their hearts can desire have no fellow-feeling for the needy, but shut close their hand against their brother who requires their aid. And as regards the teachers of religion, they too are no longer the humble followers of the holy Word; but many of them endeavour to establish their *will* as the rule for the people, and pervert the letter of the law to justify, by forced and unnatural construction, their unauthorized inroads upon the domains of religion." Such is indeed the fearful catalogue of the course of many a modern Israelite, the world and its goods are first in everything, the law and its duties the last of his consideration. Now look upon the persevering efforts of the gentile world to spread their doctrines; see how they vie with each other to promote continence, sobriety, and religious conformity; witness their efforts to induce even Israelites to forsake their faith and to become joined to them; only behold the stores of wealth lavishly poured forth to accomplish in the field of

conversion whatever money can effect; see the activity with which books, such as they are, are scattered into every nook and corner where an impression can possibly be made: and then contrast our own supineness; and is there not apparently much cause for fear to the timid, who only believes that everything depends on man, and that where mortals are active or where they are passive, things are established or things perish in exact correspondence to the amount of human agency? Yet let us nevertheless not despair; but let us look the danger boldly in the face and meet it as men who know their duty, and who feel that divine aid, and not man's power, can cause the small things to grow, and can make the large things to stand unshaken.—In the first place, it is true that in times past there was witnessed a greater degree of devotion among our people than we can find in our own days. The teachers of the people were also more disinterested; they willingly chose poverty, and all the ills of life, only to be permitted to spread the word of God: whereas now sects start up, small, it is true, but still sects, fomented and brought into life by those who ought to be faithful watchmen on the watch-tower of the Lord. But at the same time it is also true, that there were times very different from those just mentioned. There were periods of general degeneracy when the people forsook the path of religion and went astray after the imaginings of their rebellious heart, when they, who ought to have guided the many to righteousness, purposely misled those intrusted to their care, and taught in their presumption: "Ye have gone up often enough to Jerusalem" (1 Kings xii. 28), and established the worship of idols

in Bethel and Dan, and thus became the means of destruction to Israel; so that these our fathers ate sour grapes, and the teeth of their children are on an edge even at this late hour. And yet see what has been the consequence of all this doing. Terrible indeed was the immediate event which resulted from such premises. It is useless to tell you what resulted; you know how our state was dissolved more than two thousand five hundred years ago, and that it has not been reunited ever since; how they, who formerly were rulers and chiefs, became captives and servants, and obsequious slaves to those who were aliens in Jacob's house: and yet we have survived. Everything that betokens the outward existence of a nation vanished like a dream of the night; the land, to which our religion is still bound, was rendered desolate and bereft of its unworthy inhabitants: and yet the Jewish people became not extinct. Thus the national existence and a great portion of our ceremonial observances were annihilated at one blow, at one rebuke of Providence: and nevertheless we have not ceased to be. Imagine not that this was anything different from what the Lord had purposed; that it was a gainsaying of his decrees: no, it was precisely what He purposed. He struck a fearful blow at greatness which was not hallowed by his blessing; at a possession which yielded not the fruits of obedience and truth; He smote the shepherds that refused to follow his guidance, that led the flock upon paths which terminate far from the centre of righteousness. And the greatness fell, the possession passed to other hands, the shepherds perished; but the flock was preserved—preserved—ay, and it sur-

vives to this very moment, a monument that God's word is imperishable.

Ages rolled on; and a new nation, not the united Israel of old, but the Jewish people, the descendants of a portion of Jacob's sons, once more lived in the land of Palestine. Elegant cities again sprung up by the shore of the sea, by the margin of lakes, by the banks of the Jordan. But the spirit of sectarian division fell like a blight upon the homes whence idolatry was now banished; Pharisee and Sadducee were the new names under which men ranged themselves; it was not the banner of the Lord, not devotion to his word which chained the people; but "what party shall we follow," was the thought which governed all. Fierce hatred took the place of brotherly affection; the teachers assumed a superiority over the people, and the rulers of the state hated those who chided them for their neglect of duty. The end was slaughter, domestic war, fierce contest of rival factions, and the streets of the cities of Palestine were red with the gore of slaughtered brothers, bleeding under the blows of hands which should have been lifted up only to succour and to alleviate each other's misery. How bitterly have we to mourn that such was the case for many, many sorrowful years; since the Lord permitted the vengeance which such deeds demanded to follow in the natural course of events. They, who could not live in union, invited foreign invaders to arbitrate their mutual, deadly hatred; the strangers came, saw the land that it was lovely, and they seated themselves as conquerors before every gate in every city; they dictated what jurisdiction should be left to our courts, and in what cases they

should first ask what the pro-consuls would decree. And when at length the enfeebled Jews felt this yoke no longer endurable, they rose in the might of a free-born people to expel their oppressors; but like Samson who, when shorn of his locks, was powerless because the Lord had departed from him, so were our fathers' swords blunted because their sinning had enervated their arms, and their shields repelled not the arrow or the javelin of the enemy, because the God of battles was not fighting for them in the front ranks of their battle array. What availed human prowess; what use was there for human endurance tasked to the utmost! the blood that was shed flowed in vain; the prayers that were uttered in the hour of distress did not ascend on High, and the smoke of the sacrifices failed to appease the incensed Majesty of heaven. —Now, trace the consequences of this overthrow. Immediately active measures were adopted by the heathens to deprive us of our religion. They knew that they who gloried in the freedom of the law would not be willing bondmen to any human authority; and they forbade the captives from even visiting the scenes of their former glory, and destroyed, as far as they could, every vestige of the very city in which our judges used to hold their august sittings. There can be no doubt that in those days of wrath many must have despaired of the future, as they saw nothing but destruction awaiting the national religion, which they deemed hardly able to survive the national existence; and if we read rightly, the indications which we have of the manners of many of the people, immorality and forgetfulness of religious duties were by no means so rare as some might be apt to think: and

still neither the intentions of the enemies of Israel, nor the fears of their friends, were realized in the course of history so far as it has progressed to this very day.—A change came again over the world: not among Israel, but over their conquerors. Romans, Grecians, and Egyptians first cast aside their idols, in the mental revolution which overtook them. In the name of a new deity to be worshipped in a new manner, did many men, as it is said, of our own household, pass from people to people, and from city to city, to teach the heathen world a new system of doctrines and duties. With a morality borrowed from our Bible, far surpassing in brilliant purity the abominations of paganism, with a plurality in the godhead ingrafted on the sublime truths of our belief in the blessed unity, did these men travel onward over the land. It is not for us to investigate how it is that this error flourished, whilst our truth was suffering; perhaps it was permitted as a medium-point between the darkness then existing and the light for which the world is not yet prepared, to assimilate by slow degrees the nations embracing it to the light which dwells in Israel only. Enough, the new system struggled awhile in its infancy against the powers of the state opposed to it; anon it gathered strength, enlisted in its cause the rulers of the Roman empire, and in its turn it banished from Egypt, from Greece, from Rome, and their dependencies, the empire of gross idolatry, and possessed itself of its temples or erected new fanes on their sites.—Whilst this revolution was in progress by which the nations of the West were overcome, a new movement sprung up in the land of Arabia, inferior only to it in its importance and influence upon

the history of mankind. It was not, however, like its predecessor, slow and uncertain in its progress; but with a daring hand did the new reformer grasp the sword, and spread by its means what he declared to be a revelation from Heaven. And soon Persia, Tartary, Africa, India, and even Spain, followed the Koran, and the venturesome Arabs carried their attempts at conquest to the centre of the Nazarene power. Thus two adverse systems, both borrowed from Judaism, sprung into being; it matters not to our inquiry which is the most probable, which the most in accordance with reason; to us both are inadmissible; since both claim that as a foundation which our view of God and his revelation does not permit us to entertain.

But how did our people fare between these two new principles? Were they any more friendly to us than were the Roman, Grecian, or Persian idolaters? How pleasing would it be, could truth enable us to say, that those who more nearly resembled us sympathized with our affliction, and recognized in us brothers and friends.—This, however, was not our lot. Scarcely had the system of the Nazarenes ceased to struggle for existence against paganism than it took up, in its turn, the weapons of persecution. It is certainly surprising, that a system which was essentially based upon nonconformity with the doctrines of the various countries where it established itself, should almost immediately after its birth demand a conformity from all others, and resort to force, when persuasion remained without effect. Above all was its fury directed against our religion. Its ministers claimed to be the only ones in possession of the true light; all

paganism was false, and Judaism, though formerly holy unto the Lord, was now deemed as rejected because of the obduracy of its professors. Consequently they averred that it was their duty to bring people to the true standard, since without its adoption the souls refusing to believe would be irretrievably lost. So then for the love of our souls were our bodies tortured; and where this did not occur, we were subjected to heavy burdens, and to all sorts of vexations and disabilities, simply because we were Jews. And whilst these persecutions lasted, how many were on our side the victims who perished by the fire and the weapons of the executioner! how many perished miserably by the way, being thrust out from home, from kindred, bereft of all they possessed, famishing without a soul to pity them, without a friendly hand to hold to their parched lips the cooling cup of water, without a pitying passer-by to offer them a hard crust of bread! Yes, ask of the dust of the earth how many sainted souls left their bodies to perish thus miserably for the constancy which these worthy sons and daughters of the patriarchs showed towards the ancestral faith: and could the cold earth speak, could the graves cast forth their dead, millions on millions would rise up from the sepulchres which bind them, would come forth from the oceans where they sunk, would come from the air whither their ashes were driven forth whilst they were burnt up at the stake, and they would display a host of martyrs, at which the thought would shudder that so many of Israel had fallen, and that still Israel was not consumed. But on the other hand, ask how many were the timid who could not brook to leave the land of their birth, who could not resolve

to part from their treasures, who clung to a worthless life with a tenacity befitting only of cowards who know not how to die; or the designing, who joined their own enemies to become themselves the oppressors of their former associates and brothers: and again a fearful list of false-hearted cravens will rise up before you. And if you add those who turned like a faithless bow in the hand of the warrior on the day of battle, who left our ranks when their example might have animated others, and who thus brought additional wo on our household; and again those unprincipled traitors, who, speculating on their talents, embraced the doctrines of the stranger in outward appearance to advance themselves in worldly matters: you will almost wonder that any remnant has escaped of us. For, as it is, more must have been slain than were left at one time or the other; the records indeed fail us; but if we sum up the few facts we have, and draw a fair conclusion, we must arrive at this, that so fearful was the diminution at times, through various causes, all acting conjointly upon us, that at least in southern European countries, the numbers of our people were reduced to so low a standard, that a little more would only have been required to render the persecution a total extermination.*

Now look towards the East, where Mahomedanism flourished; although the persecutions were not so bitter and so frequent as they were in the West:

* A late publication of Dr. Grätz even states that, about 1510, there were but three large congregations in Germany, Frankfort on Main, Worms, and Ratisbon, and the Israelites of the latter were expelled about that time! July '27.

still, the amount of sorrow and degradation which we had to endure, and the frequent compulsory conversions to this system which, though it enjoins the belief in one God, is still not the religion of Moses, especially when added to what we had to suffer elsewhere, will increase the astonishment that we have not been totally consumed. Understand well, that during all these times there were among us men who were dishonest, covetous, worldlings of every sort, besides false teachers and those who sold their conscience for the sake of wealth, distinction, and offices; nay, we find men, once belonging to us, becoming members of ecclesiastical establishments, and even among the first of these orders. Could therefore our religion have been rooted out by such events, it would long since have utterly perished, if wickedness among ourselves or the active hate of our opponents could have produced this result.

But it will be said, that a new element of destruction has lately developed itself, first in the professed love of gentiles for our persons, and secondly in the daring with which men of our day investigate, canvass, and reject long and well-established principles. Indeed these two elements are very powerful for evil; but they, after all, give only a well-founded cause for vigilance on the part of those who fear the Lord, but by no means for despondency and alarm. Understand well what I mean by "the love of gentiles for our persons." I do not allude to the sincere affection which ought to prevail among all the sons of God's creation; which sees in every one a brother and a friend; which throbs whenever distress is presented to its view; which does not wait, in order to prompt

its charity, to inquire to what creed or to what nation a sufferer belongs; but to that falsely called love which sees no salvation except in a fixed number of dogmas, and which cannot rest on its pillow, until it has made strong efforts to induce others to adopt them. Such a love, under a different guise, it was which kindled the fires of the Inquisition; which sent numberless armies from Europe into Asia to fight for the possession of an empty grave, the existence of which was at best very problematical, and which accounted murder, tyranny, and crime of every sort as nothing, provided they ministered to its self-importance in spreading the dominion of its own cherished ideas. From such a love may the great God defend us, whether it come in the shape of a murdering inquisitor or of an humble tract-distributor; they both desire to subvert Judaism, how much so ever they profess to love the persons of the Jews; and could they succeed, the one by his terrors, the other by his dissemination in the midst of our families of unsound views, there would not be an Israelite, professing to be such, left on the face of the earth. Now it is a peculiar feature, probably never known before, that a systematic union has been formed among all sorts of men, combined for no other purpose than to effect the apostacy of all such as may come within their reach. In this unhallowed union may be found kings and princes of the earth; bishops, priests, churchmen of every sort; merchants, mechanics, labourers, physicians, women, and children; money is freely lavished; books are printed in immense quantities; men are sent out to the ends of the earth; schools are established to entice into

them Jewish children, to teach them covertly doctrines hostile to our belief; the springs of the affections are attempted to be poisoned; and all—for the sake of bringing off a few renegades as an acceptable offering to the God of truth who hateth falsehood and iniquity! Were we not the persons against whom these efforts are directed, we might smile at the absurdity of these proceedings; but it must not be lost sight of, that the object is to withdraw the Jews from their religion, to induce them by false instruction, by flattery, by deceit, by bribes, by giving employment, offices, and bounties to apostates, to come and take shelter under the protection of this thornbush, which presumes forsooth to shield the cedars of Lebanon under its puny shadow. But the Lord be praised! bad as we are, sinful as many of Israel have proved themselves, these missionaries and their friends have had to rejoice hitherto over but small success, though it must grieve every true son of Jacob that a few even can be found, either wicked enough to receive their bounties, or weak enough to be led astray by their arguments. Still it behoves us to be vigilant; we know not against whom these men and women may direct their honeyed words which conceal the deadly venom of the asp; let us instruct our youth, let us warn the uneducated among us, that they may be firm in the hour of trial.

But the second danger to which I referred is much more threatening and more powerful for mischief, as it, like all our chief sorrows, proceeds from ourselves. I speak of the daring with which new opinions are urged and old ideas rejected. In this sinning, our men of the present day follow only in the footsteps

of the schismatics in Israel of the days of the second temple. They will not become apostates, they will not become gentiles; but they wish to cut out from our opinions and from our customs whatever may be unpalatable to the gentiles or distasteful to their views. With these the word "reform" has become a daily companion; they would be Jews, if there were a reform; they would keep the Sabbath, if there were a reform; they would visit the Synagogue to pray, if there were a reform; every thing depends upon this magical word; change in every thing, change in our creed, change in our prayers, change in our mode of living, and change in our rites of introducing a child in the covenant. What is to be left? Perhaps some philosophical nondescript, a Judaism without distinctive doctrines, or Jewish doctrines without the ceremonies. The Messiah is a doctrine which, according to them, militates against the law of the lands of our dispersion; the Hebrew is annoying to them as a language out of date, and inferior to the speech of many people; and whatever else attracts their reforming notions is alike condemned as unsuitable "to the spirit of the age." But it must strike the most unlearned, that to reform upon such principles would be sheer madness. The spirit of this age is, I am certain, not to endure very long; and if we now reform by this standard, we shall probably have to reform back again before a century has elapsed.—This does not say that abuses should be tolerated forever; that every superstitious custom, neither founded in reason nor deducible from the law, should be held sacred as a part of our faith; but only that no one in his madness should stretch forth his hand against

the ark of the covenant, to attempt to throw forward his weight to support it, because the cattle which draw it may happen to stumble. For doing this to the outward ark was an Uzzah stricken with sudden death before King David's eyes; and fearful will be the retribution which will overtake those who do the same act of daring against the invisible ark, the system of religion itself which we have received and carry with us in our dispersion. Yet in the mean time these men create confusion and dismay in our assemblies; contentions too are called forth in communities, and families, who formerly lived at peace and firmly united, now look upon each other with coldness and aversion. Should this unfortunate state long continue, there would be great danger that many might grow up with an aversion towards Judaism as a system which fails to tranquillize and to produce the fruits of godliness, without which religion is a mere form, without life or blessing. No one can help acknowledging that there is great danger in this, that those who will come after us may have cause for cursing the party-spirit which estranged them from the house of God, which caused them to look with disdain upon instruction in religion, whilst their hearts were yet tender and alive to all the holy impressions which embellish our existence, and render man a brother to his fellow-man.

With all this we cannot despair of our good cause. There are, despite of such unworthy ones as we have sketched, many in whose soul abides the true spirit of piety, who love the Sabbaths of the Lord; who look forward to his sending the redeemer; who hasten to seal their children with the covenant of Abraham; in

whose ears the sound of the language of Palestine is like distant music which steals like a charm over the troubled spirit. Their number is yet doubtless the far greater in Israel; the agitators, despite of their smaller proportion, are loud in their denunciations; they will be heard, in order that their doings may be known, and thus we have them oftener present before us, than those who quietly travel in the path which their fathers have trodden, improving the talents which God has given them by the light of the sciences which now every where are open to us equally as to others. Such as these, enlightened pious men, will never be wanting; and if our danger be great, they will be present to warn the flock, not to follow the lead of the faithless shepherds, and in their hands will the work of the Lord prosper, though the clouds that threaten the peace of our house are dark, and lower in fearful masses over the horizon.

Much as men have endeavoured to destroy the union of Israel, they have not succeeded; and we have the assurance that at no time shall there be wanting men to proclaim the glory of God; and to the end of time we are told there shall be those who will bear testimony to the truth which was revealed to Israel. And so says Isaiah, in his last chapter, in language the most emphatic, and then concludes with these words:

והיה מדי חדש בחדשו ומדי שבת בשבתו יבוא כל בשר להשתחות לפני אמר ה׳ : ישע׳ סו׳ כג׳ :

"And it shall be from new-moon to new-moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, that all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Understand from "new-moon to new-moon, from Sabbath to Sabbath," these are festivals peculiar to Jews; and on these are all mankind to worship at the house of God. In this prophecy the permanence of our system is clearly foretold. The dangers which surround us are therefore to pass away to give place to peace and unity, which are to result in a union of worship of the Lord of hosts at his house in Jerusalem; and at that day we shall be able to rejoice over the great deliverance which has been granted to us, and all flesh will rejoice that we have borne aloft the standard of the truth undismayed by the terrors of persecution, unmoved by the allurements which the world has spread out as a snare for our feet.—May this be the will of the Lord, to support and shield us with his spirit of wisdom and truth. Amen.

Sivan 29th.
July 4th. } 5605.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE FASTS.

O God of Israel, hear! Father of truth, listen to the words of our prayer; Thou who ever hearest, Thou who ever art attentive to the entreaties of thy children. And if even we are guilty in thy eyes, do not avert thy view from us, do not close up thy ear, but regard us with favour, and forgive our iniquities, and accept our prayer, though it proceed from polluted lips.

For where is the one that is pure in thy sight? where the heart that is not laden with guilt? Were it then that Thou wouldst judge only to condemn, all would needs meet the awful doom of thy displeasure. In this confidence do we then approach Thee, not denying our guilt, not hiding our transgressions, but as humble suppliants of mercy which we have rejected, as petitioners for grace which we do not deserve. O hear us, then, in this hour! and let us experience in our inward heart the consolation of thy mercy and thy truth, which guide thy servants securely upon the dark path of life's troubled ocean, which have preserved Israel from the snares which have beset them from their origin as a people. Save us, Father! save us from our own perverseness; save thy heritage from the evil that is in their own souls; purge thy household from those who bring destruction into it, and single out those who are true to thy will as thy peculiar treasure, as the brilliant jewels whose light shineth for ever in the diadem of majesty that encircleth thy glory. Be it also thy will to let the truth of their sinfulness be made manifest to the sinners of Israel, that they may return unto Thee with a pure repentance, a repentance in which there is no love for past iniquity, which abhors the evil which was perpetrated on the days when the soul slumbered in darkness, unconverted to thy law, untouched by thy light. So that thy kingdom may be established over us all, and we indeed be called thy people, the first of thy fruit, holy unto thy service. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In the days when the crown of our head was struck

to the ground, at the time that, exhausted by the slaughter, sunk fainting the weary sons of Zion: those who had been spared, and they were indeed few from many, felt inwardly that it was not the prowess of the enemy which had prevailed over them, but the weight of their iniquities which had paralyzed their arm and blunted their sword; and thus they conceived it their duty to humble themselves before the Judge who had made them conscious of their guilt, and to return to the Father whose favour they had blindly rejected. Now in what did the sin of our forefathers of the first temple consist? It was, in chief, sensuality which had led them captive; they followed the customs of the heathen, which were interdicted in the law, and their very idolatry was greatly owing to the freedom from restraint which they coveted, that they might be like the other nations around them. Of the correctness of this view, the denunciations of the prophets are the best evidence which we can have, and they speak in eloquent language of the derelictions of the men of those times. When, therefore, the evil which had been threatened did actually befall us: it was at once felt that it was a natural consequence of the long series of Israel's transgressions; just as the convulsions of poison are the natural result of swallowing the substances that are inimical to human existence. But there always was known among us a remedy against the death of the soul, as soon as she finds herself stumbling through sin, and this antidote is the system of repentance which was revealed to us, from time to time, by the prophets of the Lord. These have taught us, not alone that a man should forsake his evil way and return to the Lord, in words and

thoughts; but that he should curb within himself the propensities to carnal indulgence, not to mortify the flesh, but to elevate the spirit. And indeed when the flesh becomes weak, and lassitude creeps over the bodily organs, the high enjoyment in things merely of this life is greatly blunted, and the sinkings of a mortal's nature will then impress themselves upon his conviction; and he will feel that the spirit needs some other source of tranquillity than the constant round of enjoyments and pleasurable engagements, which are so much prized by the world at large; especially will this be the case, if this mortification of the body is done from a premeditated resolve, in order to curb desire, and to avoid causes of sinful temptation.

Fasting, therefore, and abstinence from pleasure are proper remedies against the too greedy indulgence in perishable things, against the over-anxiety to live for this life only. In addition to this, when we are engaged in such an act of active penance, we are paying, so to say, in kind for the evil before perpetrated; and, by subduing our desires, we become fit to re-enter the path of righteousness which we have forsaken. But Israel had, at the destruction of Jerusalem, not sinned alone as individuals, for the nation also had violated the law; the roads to Jerusalem were not trod during ages of prosperity by those who hastened up to the house of God to offer there devotion and sacrifices; the mad and frantic orgies of heathen worship had enchained the multitude; and, in addition to this, the courts of justice were converted into tribunals that looked with indifference upon infringements of religion, and did not pronounce judgment to restore to their rights

those of the people who were suffering unjustly the tyranny exercised over them by the proud and wealthy, who considered their strong hand all-sufficient for them in their dealings with their fellow-men. When now our fathers awoke from their long mental slumber, and saw how their guilt had destroyed the sanctuary, ruined their cities, overthrown their government, and surrendered multitudes to famine and slaughter: they did not ascribe all this to fortuitous circumstances, to the accidental prevalence of their enemies over them, but to the effects of divine wrath, to the withdrawal of the favour of God, which had thus left them an easy prey to those who devoured them in all their dwellings. Thus admonished, they aroused themselves to thought, they evoked the energy of their mind to reflection, and entered into a covenant with themselves to forego the pleasures of this world, so that they might be led back to the safe guidance of their blessed but long-neglected religion. They thus met in their places of dispersion, and poured out their hearts before God, abstained on stated days as one man from carnal enjoyment, and asked, as a community, for mercy, because as a community they had transgressed. And well did they choose to act thus; no matter where the Israelite lived, if alone in the midst of a heathen community, or in the fellowship of numerous believers, on one and the same day he called with his dispersed brethren on the honoured and fearful Name, that He might have compassion of Zion, and visit again his people in mercy. And thus acting, he was reminded that there was something else to live for than the fleeting hour; that the Israelite's resting-place was not the land of his captors, nor

this earthly state the final abode of his spirit. He was reminded, when fasting for the misfortunes which befell our fathers in their obduracy, that sinfulness is a state of warfare against the Deity; that long indulgence, the withholding of retribution, is no sign of exemption, no token that the Lord has overlooked to let his violated will be avenged on the transgressor; and that it is best therefore for man to bear the sweet burden of religion in his youth, that he submit while it is yet time to listen to the breathings of divine instruction, which is preached to him from a thousand sources, all appealing to him to walk in the path of life and earn for himself everlasting salvation. He was reminded when he entered into the house of prayer, where other sons of Israel wept and mourned for Zion, that he and they had lost a country lovely in its products, blessed by the overshadowing providence of the Creator; that they had lost on the day of strife that for which the patriot's heart beats high—the sovereignty and independence of their native land;—that through this they were compelled to forego the worship of the King in glory in his sanctuary, which He had chosen for the dwelling of his name, and that they were compulsory sojourners far from their loved heritage, and that they could not be united again as one people in any other spot, no matter how large the land, or fertile the soil, except in that small margin of the great ocean which the Lord had given to Abraham. He was reminded, when his soul fainted within him, that the earth one day must fade from his view, that he must then leave what his heart clung to as a legacy to those who laboured not for it, and that of all his toil there will be nothing left to him as his

own, save the labours of righteousness and the acquisition he may have made in the knowledge of the law of God. And who can aver that a day of penitence, passed with such feelings, which induced men to survey the past, the present, and the future, could have been otherwise than wholesome in its influence? It taught the Israelite to abhor the sin which banished his fathers from their home; it admonished him to regard with kindness those who like him were wanderers over the face of the earth; and it breathed into him hopes to look forward to the restoration of the good things taken from him by the loss of fatherland; and then it bade him look upward unto his Father in heaven as the final rest of his soul, in whose presence all the acts, words, and thoughts of life would ultimately see their final perfection.

To those, therefore, who feel for their religion and its departed glory, the fasts of Israel have always been seasons sacred to the memory of the past, and incentives to hope for the future. And not alone this,—the true believers felt in humbling themselves before God, that in all their trials He would be with them to preserve them from annihilation. Whenever then calamities thickened around us, when the wrath of man burnt fiercer than the lightnings of Heaven: the servants of the Lord forgot not the presence of their Almighty Redeemer, and they resumed the pious course of their fathers, and they went with fasting and prayer unto the house of assembly. And if even in the dungeon, they lifted up there the heart and soul above the cares and sorrows of their existence; and they obtained enlargement; not always, it is true, in a deliverance from earthly sorrows, for many a

holy spirit succumbed in the body to the sufferings which passed over us like mighty streams, but in the exaltation which was vouchsafed to them over these very sorrows, in the light which beamed through the bars of their prison-houses, in the fortitude which bade them walk to the burning stake, triumphant in their faith more than the warrior on the day of victory. And thus were the Israelites upheld through ages, when suffering seemed to be the only heirloom bequeathed to them from the heroes of antiquity, when all their ancestral glory was only an additional incentive to heap upon them, the unoffending and unresisting sufferers, the scorn, the hatred of an infuriated world. O, in those days it was a holy thing for the sons of Jacob to dwell with a melancholy pleasure upon the recital of ancient glory; it was then, with hearts overflowing with gratitude, that they reverted back to the days when Israel was a child,—when God loved him for the righteousness of the fathers, the great names of ancient times, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—when He saw his suffering in the land of Mitzrayim, and sent his messenger Moses to afflict Pharaoh with mighty wonders, to divide for his armies the waters of the Red Sea,—when He sent down his glory to the top of Mount Sinai, to teach his first-born wisdom and truth. Yes, these were themes of a brilliant past for suffering believers; in these recollections they could revel,—no stranger could therein disturb their joy; no one alien to the family of Jacob could claim aught in this heavenly delight. And though they might be scorned by the proud and thoughtless rulers of the earth: they felt that all the light which these enjoyed was first taken from their

law; and they could point to deeds of mercy, wrought in their behalf, such as the Creator alone could produce. They possessed also a system of faith and actions which man could never have invented, which could and did spring from the wisdom of God alone. And thus they could well bear with the deprivations of the present, in their constant living in the days of a long past antiquity, an antiquity nevertheless full of youthful vigour, and felt by its acting upon, and influencing every age which followed its predecessor, as must be the case with those laws and ordinances which the Lord himself instituted as the unquenchable light of the world. But not the past alone was to them a source of joy and comfort; the future likewise opened to them a brilliant and pleasant destiny. Let other nations enjoy the moment, the glitter of royalty, the applause of triumph of principles or of arms; let associations glorify themselves over the victory which their mind has obtained over the opinions of others: the Israelites had far more to look forward to—a regeneration of the world by their acts and sufferings. True, they had no king of their own to lead their armies to battle; they had no share in the government of the world; they were aliens in every land; their principles were a passport to oppression; their learning was contemned, and the portals of the temple of science were shut against them; as unclean, as affected with leprosy, were the gates of cities closed to bar their entrance; but what could all these hardships effect? Could they stifle the spirit of God that breathed hope and consolation in them? No; they felt that the word of the Lord had gone forth to call unto himself a chosen servant from the seed of Israel, the

divinely endowed prince, whom they looked forward to with hope and fear, the chief, unto whom nations should flock to inquire, What has the Lord spoken? who is to rule, not by the potency of human prowess, but by the spirit of God that is to instruct him in all things; and they were insured, from their faith in divine promises, that at his coming there would be an end to warfare and strife; that the idols would utterly be banished from the earth; that errors would be annihilated before the triumphant progress of truth, and that in those days, the religion revealed on Sinai would not be a token of oppression to its professors, but a light unto salvation to all who would seek its wisdom, to each son of man who may come forward to drink of the fountain opened to all lips by the manifestation of the divine power. And they also believed that each one could contribute by his own acts to the speedy approach of this glory; for as all had an equal share in the redemption from Egyptian bondage, and as all were equally present in their ancestors at the annunciation of the law from Horeb: so all have the same interest in, and can therefore be equally active for, the good which the Lord has spoken of for Israel. Whenever then the stated fasts came round, whether the day was long or short, the faithful assembled and, in the language of Palestine, they implored the Lord of their fathers to remember them in all his loving kindness, and to restore his glory to his house at Jerusalem, and to bless his people with the light of his countenance, by sending to them his messenger of peace, the redeemer, who is to feed them securely on the mountains of the land of Israel. In this manner have these days of observance, first

instituted by the prophets, come down to our own times, full of meaning and high significance, not as periods for a senseless affliction of the body, but as days of commemoration, of repentance, of prayer, and of renewed hope.

Hitherto, brethren, the Lord has been our Shield; and though often passing through the waters of tribulation, we have been preserved to transmit to those who may come after us the recollections of the past, the duties of the present, and the hopes of the future. But some men of the day, who only see what passes before their eyes, who are too worldly to look back upon the past, and have no faith in the future, may say, perhaps, in their presumption, "What need we to afflict ourselves about events long past? what is unto us the destruction of Jerusalem? what the scattering of Israel? In times indeed when we were scorned, it was well enough to fast and weep; but now our condition is improved—we are now equals with other men; the present is ours as well as the gentiles'; we cannot keep up recollections of past injuries, we wish to forgive, to forget, secure in our rights, careless about the future." There are men who argue thus, if arguing it can be called; worldlings, who see not that such liberty as we enjoy is at best but the gift of Providence, granted us for the time, not the result of a radical change in the history of the world,—without assuring us that persecution in all its horrors may not come again to terrify us in the city, to pursue us in the field. "The present is ours," say these men. Alas! Israel is yet suffering; the present is not ours: would to Mercy it were so. Here, in this land, we are untrammelled in the exercise of

our religion; there are no inquiries made by law, "why we believe as we do." But there are many other lands, where the Jew is as much a slave as during the times of the Crusaders. There is, it is true, a different spirit in the persecutions; it was then the infuriated masses that travelled from city to city to destroy the infidels, the enemies of their religion, as they called us: whereas now no one is capitally punished for his belief; but for all that, there is no freedom for Israel. In many countries we are restricted to filthy, narrow streets, beyond which a Jew cannot dwell; in others we are limited to certain pursuits, whilst all the nobler professions are interdicted to us; in others, the number of those who are permitted to marry is based upon the proportion of married persons who have died, and left the right of protection as an inheritance to their successors; and in others—But what good can result to recount all the sorrows of our people at the present day? Are not our ears constantly pained at hearing the acts of tyranny which are perpetrated in civilized Europe, or barbarous Asia and Africa, by the rulers and people? and where is our power to resist this evil? "The present is ours," yea, as always, a present of suffering; and wo to those who depend upon the march of intellect to put a stop to these cruelties! Only the good Father, who chastiseth us to be his servants, can end all this anguish. But well is it for us to be so reminded that we are the humble of the earth, so that our heart may not wax proud and forget what is due to our God and his code. How many would there be ready to throw off the burdensome duties that confine them within the narrow limits of the

law; but they are ever and anon reminded that the blood of Jacob flows in their veins; and with every renewed account of oppression that reaches them, their pride in their name is aroused, they feel that they are brothers of the oppressed, that they have yet an interest in those whom oceans and mountains divide from their sight.

But there are other men who are tired of their separate national existence, who feel the name of Jew a disgrace, who would gladly lose their nationality among the nations of the earth for the simple boon of civil liberty. They desire to be known as Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, or Englishmen; they wish not to see the restoration of the captives of Israel to the holy land, content to remain in a severed state, like the fragments of a mighty ship, floating upon the vast ocean. They cannot deny that they were once a people, that they are disjointed members of this former state; but talk to them of being brought again together, that these disjointed limbs should form again one homogeneous body: and they will say, with derision, that they desire to see no such restoration. Well might a prophet, in the bitterness of spirit, call out over the degeneracy of his age:

העבד ישראל אם יליד בית הוא מדיע היה לבז :
ירמ׳ ב׳ יד׳ :

"Is Israel a servant, or one born to service in the house? why hath he been given to plunder?" Jeremiah ii. 14.

Yes, are we slaves to the world at large? were we born bondmen to every nation under the sun, that we should be always ready to be plundered by whomso-

ever will stretch forth his hand against us? Is that our aspiration for liberty, that we should be content with the measure of freedom which we may be permitted to enjoy in each state? I know how to appreciate liberty; my heart too throbs with emotions of thankfulness that I can travel hither and thither, write and speak, worship and pray, govern and be governed, like every freeman in the land. But despite of this, I am an Israelite, and gladly would I see our state restored under God, and by his guidance, where the laws administered would be the biblical laws, where the Jew would not and need not receive his rights as a favour, where there would be no talk of toleration, where there would be no fear of abridgment of privileges, where, in short, the Israelite would be free, not because the stranger grants it, but because his laws, his religion, his faith, constitute him a part and parcel of the state itself. Under the best circumstances, in the freest country under the sun, the Jews are subject to disqualifications, not from the laws of the country, perhaps, but from the circumstances of their religion disqualifying them naturally from participating in all offices, or engaging actively in commerce, upon equal terms with others, if they wish to live in strict conformity to their faith. Every one of you can answer for himself whether this is so or not. It is true, every one is bound to sacrifice his worldly gains when his duty clashes therewith. But there are unfortunately too many who cannot resist temptation, and who yield their spiritual welfare for so much gain, or so much distinction. To say, therefore, that a state of restoration is not desirable to us, is asserting, that it is preferable to expose us to con-

stant diminutions, to the caprice of nations, and the will of tyrants, to the end of time. Surely such cannot be the will of God; surely this cannot be the hopes with which the prophets have inspired us. We may in the meantime be good citizens, faithful to the laws of the land, where they come not in collision with the superior obligations we owe to the Bible; but let us never relinquish the hope, that, if not in our own day, still the time will come when the Lord will have mercy on his land, restore his people, rebuild his temple, where we all may worship as freemen, as Israelites, as servants alone of God, as the children of those with whom the Lord made a covenant that He would bless them with his everlasting favour, and that through them and their seed all the earth shall be blest.

Let us, then, even the men of this country, and of this age, join with our brothers in lands where oppression yet lies heavily upon them, and fast on the days consecrated to our fallen glory, and not grow weary with praying unto Him who is enthroned in heaven that He may not forsake his people, but bless them with the outpouring of his spirit, and guide them unto himself by penance and good deeds, that they may be found worthy in his eyes, and be blessed with all the good which He has promised them through his servants, the prophets, when the walls of Jerusalem are built again, and his spirit dwells anew in his temple between the wings of the cherubim. Amen.

Tamuz 27th.
August 1st. } 5605.

DISCOURSE IX.

ISRAEL IN COVENANT WITH GOD.*

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS!

A good work has this day been accomplished, a new house of prayer rears its fair proportions towards heaven, and it has been set aside, for days to come, unto the service of our God and King, the Holy One of Israel. It has ever, on similar occasions, been the good custom amongst us to have words of earnestness addressed to the assembled brethren, in order that the power of audible sounds may not be wanting to impress upon the mind something to be remembered above, and in addition to the imposing service and the psalmody uttered in praise of the Most High, the Guardian of Jacob's sons. The present occasion would therefore be incomplete, if one of the essential elements of our solemn assemblies, the word of instruction, were to be absent from us this day; let me therefore entreat you to give me your kind attention, whilst I accomplish the task imposed upon me by your partiality, by laying before you some reflections which well befit the labour which has been completed this day.

Let us take as the text for our contemplation the

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following from the Parashah of this week, being a portion of the concluding address of our blessed teacher Moses to the people of Israel before his departure from this life. He was speaking to the assembled multitudes that had so long listened to his words of power, and summoning before him all the classes as belonging to the divine covenant, he added:

ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי כרת את הברית הזאת
ואת האלה הזאת: כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד
היום לפני ה׳ אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה עמנו היום:
דבר׳ כט׳ יג׳ יד׳:

"And not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him who standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and with him who is not here with us this day." Deut. xxix. 13, 14.

Forty years had Israel been in training to become a people unto the Lord, and during all this time they had deeply sinned and frequently rebelled against the Power who had redeemed them from slavery. Stiff-necked in their conduct towards God, they had followed their evil inclinations, and thus transgressed the law whenever a favourable opportunity had presented itself. With all this the prophet knew that the law had taken deep root in the hearts of his followers. He, indeed, was himself doomed to die in the wilderness, in full sight of the lovely land whither he was not to go, because he had not sanctified the will of God at the waters of contention in the wilderness of Zin; he was to leave the people in the yet untried hands of his trusty Joshua; the deeds which had struck terror, wonder, and dismay in both sons and

enemies of Jacob's house would soon be forgotten, when those who had witnessed them should have passed away from the busy scenes of life; the Israelites were to enter into the midst of refined and powerful idolaters, whose daughters were fair and whose country was lovely; and they were, what is more than all, to be left to the self-will of their own hearts, when the conquest should be over, free to form alliances with nations that knew not the worship of the Most High, who bowed down to the host of heaven or the works of their own hands. Nay, he foresaw that all these circumstances would work their effects upon his hearers and their descendants; that, in short, the curses which he had pronounced against them would have to be accomplished to the very letter. Yet his hope of better things faltered not; he flung from his soul the gloomy picture of an unhappy future, and he felt conscious that his structure, which in Heaven's name he had reared for so long a time, would never be totally lost to mankind, to Israel; for that, when one generation should have passed away, another and another yet would start up, as from the earth, to proclaim aloud that they are men in covenant with the Lord ONE, the God and Father of Israel. "Not with you alone," that is, the people then living and known as the Israelites, "do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him who standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and with him who is not here with us this day." If we consider that Moses spoke to all the Israelites of his day, we shall have no difficulty in ascertaining who the absent ones were who are here referred to. They were the whole seed of Jacob, all who might follow

those who came forth from Egypt to the latest generation. The prophet limits not his words to one century, nor to one country; but he ranges over an indefinite period, over an indefinite space, including those who were not then, could not be then, standing in person at the door of the tabernacle, to give in their adhesion by word of mouth to the terms of the covenant proposed to them by the blessed son of Amram, and those who were actually present, and had been cognizant of the great miracles of the Lord, which He had wrought before them in the land of Mitzrayim and the desert, where his mercy had so long protected them and provided for all their wants.

Had Moses been an ordinary man, one who spoke merely from analogy, human probability, he could scarcely have ventured to make so bold a declaration; or if he had, it would to a surety not have come to pass. There were at that time too many reasons to apprehend that the polity which he had been the means of revealing to the world would soon fall into oblivion, when the inquirer views the very turbulent disposition of the people, their but recent state of ignorance, and the constant inducements held out to them to break away from a law which grants so few pleasures, but on the contrary imposes many restrictions upon us in almost every stage of life. But he was not a man of every day; he did not reason from probability or analogy; he was instructed from the highest Source of wisdom, and he could therefore not fail of saying the truth even when speaking of that which was to happen: in fact the opposite idea must be inconceivable from the very nature of the case; since He who is the Father of all men, and knows

their frame, also penetrates the recesses of futurity with unerring certainty, with a view from which nothing escapes, from which nothing is hidden; and it was his word, his will, which Moses proclaimed, and from Him he received knowledge of the things which were to be. Let us not commit the error then of looking upon our teacher as a mere historian, who relates events which happened under his eye, nor as a successful leader, who glorifies himself for the accomplishment of some mighty achievement; for if he had been only thus, though he had combined in himself the learned writer and the brave general, though his wisdom had become the fundamental law of all civilized states, which in fact it is this day; still he would not demand our implicit faith, the entire surrendering of our judgment to his instruction; since there might be room to doubt whether or not some of the things announced by him might not remain unfulfilled, as, even assuming for him the highest power of penetration incident to human reason, there would still be a certainty that the major part of his speculations would necessarily be mere assumptions, which might or might not come to pass. We are not then Mosaists, or followers of Moses, nor is ours the Mosaic religion, or Mosaism, which is the new term now used abroad, in the sense which is usually given to systems called after their founders. We indeed call *our law* the Mosaic law or law of Moses, because the Lord's own messenger gives it that name, inasmuch as he was the means of making the divine legislation known to his compatriots; still it is not for this reason a system of Moses, a Mosaism, of which Moses was the founder or inventor; no, we are Hebrews, Israelites,

followers of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, descendants of those who themselves heard from Sinai, "I am the Lord thy God," "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" we are the legitimate successors of those who themselves entered into a voluntary covenant "to obey all the words of the Lord," and who partook of all the blessings and hardships which accompanied their journey through the desert.

If then we go to examine our religion we must not proceed as though we were entering upon a mere scientific inquiry, at liberty to refuse belief to one, and to correct another part; but we should sit down to this study with fear and trembling, with a mistrust in our own power of comprehension, with a well-founded conviction that the word is true, although our understanding of it be imperfect and unsatisfactory to ourselves. We should reflect that it is not Moses who speaks, but the holy spirit of our Creator, who has written the book of the law for our guidance and instruction. For all this we are not prohibited from reasoning on, or investigating the evidences of religion; they are open to our scrutiny, and challenge the strictest investigation: provided, as I said, that we do not enter upon this labour with a reckless defiance of our early training, and bring to the task that humility which becomes, and is required of an inquirer after truth. Let us now apply what has been premised to the text we have chosen. It is part of a long discourse pronounced at the most solemn moment of existence, that, just preceding the awful hour of death, when the connexion between earthly life and eternity is mysteriously interwoven in the existence of the spirit by its de-

parture from the earth. It is then that man looks back upon all that he has done with an eye different from what it was, when expectation and hope stood in our way, calling us hither and thither to pursue some new phantom, some unexpected vista where success smiled in the dim distance. O! it is then that we turn with loathing from the idols to which we clung during our pilgrimage; we then see the nakedness of our unholy desires which would fain rob us of our peace hereafter; we cannot then hide from ourselves the wickedness and falsehood to which we attached ourselves year by year and hour by hour; we feel the ground, so to say, as sliding from under our feet, and we stretch forth our hands to the God our Saviour, to snatch us up into his embrace, to shield us from the consequences of our misdeeds. It may be, nay it is often the case, that wicked men will die with a falsehood on their lips; they cannot imagine that this life must indeed terminate, they cannot bear, whilst the breath is yet in their nostrils, to forego one iota of their assumed self-importance. But not so is the case with the pure and righteous; they have no part to play, no assumed character to sustain; they therefore attach no importance to fortuitous circumstances in which they may have been placed, but view their past life in all its deformity and error, conceal nothing from themselves for which atonement should be made, and attach not any undue value to their good deeds, any farther than that they may calm the conscience; and they trust in the mercy of the Creator, that He will perfect what they have left undone in the weakness of fallen human nature.

So then it was on one of the last few days of Moses's

life, that he called around him the people of Israel, together with the strangers and the foreign labourers who were among them. He rehearsed briefly, but eloquently, the principal events of the forty years during which he was connected with the administration of their public affairs, and recalled to their mind how frequently they had presumptuously sinned against the Lord. He also repeated certain of the commandments; but more than all, he insisted anew upon the distinctive doctrines of the religion which he had taught so long; and emphatically instructed the people to believe in no association in the godhead, in no thought of a division; for that the Lord, the Eternal, is one and alone, and that He woundeth and healeth, slayeth and bringeth to life again, and that from his power there is none to save us, if He willeth to condemn. And when all this had been accomplished by the teacher, when the conduct of the Hebrews had during his whole connexion with them been the reverse of obedience: he still lays before them again a solemn compact, to answer for the last time, whether they would remain true and faithful to the law, to the Lord, to themselves! The Israelites did assent, and the book of the law was written and completed by the hand of the prophet, and he delivered it to the priests and Levites to place it by the side of the ark of the covenant, that it might be a witness against them in all future generations. There was no wild enthusiasm in Moses's manner; he was calm and collected; he knew his end to be rapidly approaching, whilst neither his sight was dimmed nor his bodily vigour in aught diminished; he stood like the giant of the forest, in the branches of which thousands of

the feathered tribe have built their nests, towering upward, unbending, erect, unterrified, whilst around it play the lightnings of heaven, and its branches are tossed by the fury of the tempest, and its leaves are dashed to the earth by the drenching rain. And as his body was strong, so was his soul; he felt that death was coming at the command of God to release him from his earthly labours; and hence he spoke at that very time with the same dignity and candour which he had exhibited throughout his long career, and which characterized him chiefly as the great messenger, like whom none has arisen in Israel since his day. In this temper of mind he did not, he could not think of deceiving himself and others by a pretended belief in things of which he was not himself convinced; there is nothing recorded of an agony of soul, of an unwillingness to die, of a forced submission, which wrung from him contradictory declarations; indeed there is no death-scene described in history so full of the vigour of life as that of Moses; he passed from the changeful scenes of the earth to a uniformity of happiness in an altered state; and with the most solemn conviction, forced upon himself and his hearers, that he had been a messenger of truth in what he had done and what he had foretold, he announced the permanence of the law and the permanence of Israel.

History has told us then how Israel rose from a nation of slaves to become the conquerors of the beautiful country of Palestine. But history also tells us that the predictions of Moses have been literally fulfilled in all things, where they have yet been reached by the events which have occurred, especi-

ally with reference to the permanence of the law in the line of Jacob; for this is the principal topic of our to-day's discussion. O! how fearful were the delinquencies of our fathers from the day that they entered into the promised land; how did they love their idols; how did they follow the ways of the gentiles; how did they forget the Lord! And what followed? Punishment after punishment came over them and their land, and they ever and anon were made to feel the awful consequences which follow in the wake of sin. But loudly howled the storm of evil within their breast; they forgot the Lord their Redeemer, and would not hearken to the admonition of their prophets; and they braved the denunciations of the law, and the vengeance it threatens against transgression. It is not necessary to dwell upon the end of this sinning; our dispersion at this day proves that the law has established its truth; but it likewise proves, that the blessing of the possession of our religion has also been accomplished. Israel sinned in Palestine, under the rule of the Judges who lived after Joshua; they did each whatever seemed best in their eyes; horrid crimes were perpetrated with unblushing effrontery; still a Samuel arose out of the midst of this chaos, and by the establishment of the schools of the prophets, no doubt his work, he reëstablished the blessed rule of law and good order among the people. Time rolled on, and wicked and foolish kings rebelled against the Lord, and set up for themselves idols in Dan and Beërsheba and the cities of Judah; the land grew tired of bearing on its surface the sinning generation, and they were cast forth bound with the chains of slavery into the kingdoms of

Assyria and Babylon. Yet again was the law restored, and we owe to the ready scribe, the zealous Ezra, the renewal of the covenant between God and his people, when they pledged themselves to walk in the ways which He had prescribed to their fathers. And after this the work did not fail for want of labourers to carry it forward with trusty heart and faithful hands; and when the calamities thickened, and persecution from without at length came to aid the evil inclination within: a new spirit awoke in the people, and they clung to the ark of the Lord with undying attachment in the hours of the greatest peril. Onward has been the march of ages; circumstances have changed with us; new dangers have constantly sprung up to add to the difficulties which necessarily encompass us in the state of our dispersion; again and again have our enemies predicted our speedy destruction; they have tortured, or slain, or banished us in most countries, and embittered our days in all, by a constant war against our spirits, by exciting prejudice, by spreading calumny and falsehood of all kinds concerning us. Still we are here on earth to praise the Lord, still here to bear a living testimony, that we are his witnesses, and that He is God; still we are on earth the legitimate and lineal descendants of the patriarchs of former days, of the early reformers who defied the worshippers of idols to exhibit their power; of the philosophers of primeval ages who kindled the torch of reason by the blazing fire of God's revelation; and we are here, here on this spot, a small remnant, a fragment of the great house of Jacob, to utter with our lips our assent to the continually accumulating weight of the constantly re-

newed confession, that Israel is ever true, will be ever true in its chosen sons, they who are the light of the world, who walk in the fear of the Most High, to uphold the ancient faith unbroken, to believe at all times in the promises of their God, to follow unflinchingly, even through the whelming waves of persecution, the guidance of their Father who is in heaven, though it lead them to the gates of death. And no matter how great and unpardonable were the backslidings of our people, some like these just described were always ready to sanctify the glorious and fearful Name of the God of Israel, and to exhibit in their lives a beautiful illustration of the effects of the saving faith implanted in our hearts upon the conduct of those who yield themselves to its promptings.

It was in this manner that Moses made a covenant with those who were not present with him on that day before the Lord, with those namely, who have ever since succeeded to the name, the lineaments, the obligations of Israel. And ye too, brethren, have by the work which is this day completed, by solemnly dedicating it to the service and name of the Most High God, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth,—ye too have by this means entered into that blessed covenant in your mature age, into which you were introduced at your birth by your pious progenitors. Do not imagine, however, that it is enough that you have merely erected a house, as a dwelling for the ark where the law is deposited; that you have finished your task by providing it with every thing needful for worship, whilst the spirit of worship itself is wanting among you. Reflect, that only through the righteousness of the whole people could the tem-

ple at Jerusalem become the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that through the same means only, on the part of each of our congregations, can their houses of prayer become acceptable in the eyes of the same unchanging Being, who called unto himself Abraham out of Ur in Chaldea. There has not been pointed out to us any new means of becoming acceptable to God; the same requisites are still demanded of us,—faith and obedience; and these are to be pursued through our entire life, on all occasions, under all circumstances. Indeed, what use would a place of worship be, if the worshippers therein assembled there merely from ostentation? from pride? from motives to bear rule over others? Only with contrition, with humility, should the sacred precincts be entered; with sorrow for past misdeeds, with hopes in the mercy of our Father, that He would perfect by his spirit, what we have humbly commenced, and that He would heal the wounds which our iniquity may have struck against the peace of our soul. Such worshipping will make us daily better, more pleasing in the eyes of God and man; it will influence our speech, it will influence our actions, it will also purify our thoughts; and the more strongly we have impressed it on our mind, the stronger and holier will grow the plant of righteousness, which will be lustrous with everlasting verdure, and which will preserve an unfading freshness till the end of our days. — Pursue then righteousness in the manner which the law ordains; do not use your own imperfect understanding to reason away what God has commanded; ask rather of your elders, and let them instruct you; inquire of those who are the fathers in

Israel, that they may speak unto you; and never, O never! listen to those who would gladly sow dissension in Israel, who would urge their own foolish counsels as the words which the Lord has taught; whereas, they invent deceitful things out of their own hearts, and teach the words which the prophets of God have not spoken. Pursue peace in all your acts and words; seek not to bear unjust rule over each other; endeavour not to become each one the chief in the earthly Synagogue; for it is but a short rule at best, to be soon dropped, though long you wield the staff of authority; but seek on the contrary to act rightly and truly towards each other, bear with each other's weakness and failings, and have one mind, one aim to pursue: thus you will leave this life to be accepted on high, and live unto eternity in the sanctuary of the Lord.

But in addition to this individual duty, you have also general obligations to perform. You are members of the house of Israel, you are a surety and pledge that in you there shall always be a defender of the good cause. As such then, let all your deeds have a public bearing, and forego your own advantage, when the general good demands it. Let your exertions for success not blind you to the necessities of others; and never do any act, however it might be legal, which could cast odium upon the fair fame of the house of Israel. Towards the world at large, too, you have duties to fulfil. All men are your brothers, though the Hebrew brother claims your first love. All men are children of one God, like you they are endowed with an intelligent spirit. Love them, therefore, cherish them in joy and in sorrow, and sanctify

the name of the Lord, by practically proving, how beautiful his religion is which teaches you to be angels of mercy to all who may claim your sympathy, to all who may look up to you for aid and for counsel. The enemies of our faith have always endeavoured to make it appear, as though we are by it taught to hate and persecute the non-Israelites; whereas, it will be your business to prove that the religious Jew asks not the sufferer of what belief he is, he demands not of the widow and orphan, whether they be of the house of Jacob; but he opens his heart, he empties the full hand, in order that the hungry may be fed, the naked be clothed, the needy protected, though their souls know not, their lips breathe not a prayer to God the Eternal.

"Not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath," were the words of Moses. That generation went down to the dust as all other men, and left us of the present day no other inheritance than the name of Israel and the law which they had received. All the other glory and wealth which they acquired perished before the eyes of the world, and whatever was earthly in their greatness has been destroyed by the tooth of time. The imperishable only alone remains; the immortal, which was immortal in the days of Moses, survives in all its strength, and because it was thus immortal could he predict that it would never yield before the progress of destruction. Our assembly here to-day proves, that up to our time the prophecy has been upheld, and the promise of that day is now an event in history. And though now the evil hour is come, as some faint hearts believe, which is to prove whether it shall stand longer or not: still

let those who fear this evil, look into the hearts of our people, and then let them say whether or not the ancient spirit yet survives, whether or not the same love for religion in the abstract does not live there as ever. Should, however, any danger threaten us through disunion or apostacy: then remember that you are men of the covenant, who cannot honestly leave the good cause to suffer for want of valiant defenders. The building in which we have met is a witness, that you have felt the importance of the Lord's covenant, the weight of his law which is implanted in your souls. Take then good heed that those who are not with us this day before the Lord, may arise after you to propagate to yet many distant generations the knowledge which you have received; and let it be your endeavour that the worshippers in this house may all become true and faithful witnesses of the glorious message, the unity of God and the permanence of his religion, which has been proclaimed to you from Sinai, which is the legacy bequeathed by your fathers. In this manner will the spirit of God dwell in this house which you have built, and thus only can it be truly called sacred to the Creator and King. And may He bless you as He blessed Abraham, and be with us all as He was with our forefathers. Amen.

Elul 24th. } 5605.
Sept. 26th. }

DISCOURSE X.

ISRAEL'S FAITH AND DEEDS.

O ETERNAL GOD OUR KING! hear our supplication, which we pour out in thy sanctuary—in the house where thy children congregate to sanctify thy Name. Many are the evils which beset us; and Thou knowest the dangers which accompany us during our pilgrimage in the valley of tears, where scarce a joy blooms, but sorrow lurks in the opening cup of the dazzling flower. How fleeting are our days, and how permanent art Thou; we are here like a shadow that flits swiftly away before the light of the sun: whilst to thy existence there is no end, to thy days no measurable termination. O take us, then, under the protection of thy power; shield us, by thy spirit, from the attacks of misfortune which constantly threaten us. But if it be thy will to afflict us with any one of the ills to which flesh is subject, because of its mortality: then let us be strengthened, that we may be able to endure submissively and penitently the wounds which we have to bear. Let us feel that it is Thou, O Father! who chastisest, that it is not in wrath, but in parental love, that we are bruised by thy justice; so that we may be healed through our wounds, and our souls rise upward in the resplendent light of purity and sins forgiven, to become angels before thy throne, messengers of mercy to other mor-

tals yet dwelling in the houses of clay, in their dark hours of tribulation.

D Father! another year is gone, a new year is again commenced, and we stand yet in thy house, renewed* in the beauty of holiness, to be a worthy dwelling for thy Name. Through difficulties and trials we have been preserved, and we are again permitted to come hither to seek thy presence. Dark looks the past over which we have travelled—its joys are nearly forgotten, its bitterness is too well remembered. Dark frowns the future in its uncertainties and prospective dangers. O grant that the evils of the past may redound to our salvation, and that the apprehended dangers of the future may become means of righteousness and purification, which are to bind us strongly to Thee, to be indissolubly united to thy Spirit in everlasting bliss. And may, in the words of thy prophet, "Thy work be seen upon thy servants, and thy glory upon their children." So shall we be sanctified by thy grace, O God! and so shall this house become a light unto salvation to all who come hither to pray. And may this year be to us and all Israel a year of blessing and peace, of light and truth. Amen.

BRETHREN!

To us it was said by the prophet who had been made the instrument of our redemption:

כי חלק ה' עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו : דבר' לב' ט' :

"For the portion of the Lord is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Deuteronomy xxxii. 9.

* The synagogue had just then been enlarged and refitted.

Full of compassion for our degraded state in the bondage of Egypt, did the Lord descend in his glory, to purchase, as it were, unto himself, a people which should be his peculiar portion among the families of the earth; just as, in preceding centuries, He had called to his service the shepherd Abraham, imparting to him, out of compassion for the forlorn state of mankind, some of those everlasting truths which are the best guardians of human happiness. By the calling of Abraham, God covenanted that, descended from him, there should always exist a nation, though ever so small in numbers, that should be specially devoted to profess a belief in the Creator, which should conform to the words of the Bible: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy people," meaning that, as it is the priests' business to do the work of the temple to which they may be appointed, and to teach to their scholars the peculiar doctrines which appertain unto their system, thus should the Israelites, the sons of Abraham, exist on earth as priests in God's temple, the entire world, to be devoted to the specialties of the service which might be demanded of them, and to teach the doctrines of their faith, each generation to their successors. The religion was to be thus a privilege, an especial favour, by which its possessors were to be exempt from the curse of ignorance which afflicts other men. We have before exhibited how the calling of Abraham, and the raising from his descendants of a peculiar people, were necessary in the divine economy, and how they have thus far best subserved to become ultimately the means of subjecting all mankind to the truths which the divine revelation contains. And

not a light privilege is this. Think, brethren! all the sons of man are the children of God; they have received at his hands life, free will, and intellect; the human face divine marks them to be, like yourselves, parts of the last and best work of the creation. Yet they have not been instructed like you. Folly and wickedness, in times past, nay, from the very creation almost, have obscured the brilliancy of wisdom and truth, and mankind, by them misled, have adopted various systems of belief, various ideas of a Godhead, various notions on duty: so that error is palpably everywhere prevalent. Men of intellect, feeling the degradation thus cast upon them, have ever struggled to dispel the mist, to rend the veil which covered the nations; but in vain; the mist still continues to rest upon the weary soul, and the veil of doubt and darkness yet covers the face of the nobles of the earth.

Was it not then a great thing that, before our eyes, were revealed the fires of glory that blazed terrifically on Mount Sinai? that we heard the awful thunders which surrounded the Majesty of heaven? and that our ears drank in sounds which yet reëcho there, words which at once and forever broke the chains of darkness, and kindled the everlasting lamp of life in our spirits, and which taught us to know the great God who created without an assistant, who governs without any foreign aid, and who blesses without a mediator? Were these things matters of thankfulness? were they themes for rejoicing to the enlightened searcher for truth? Yea, they were, they are so to this day. Glorify, then, the Lord, you of the house of Jacob! bless his eternal Name, ye of the seed of Abraham! for great was his kindness which He

displayed over us in his might, and blessed be his Name, which abideth in truth forever. We indeed were taught by those events which no human power could have produced, that there is no god in heaven or on earth, who can do like our God's great works and mighty deeds; and the lesson has sunk deeply into our innermost soul, and the events of thirty and more centuries have not been able to obliterate it from our recollection. And wherever the Israelite may be, he hears a voice whispering in his ear, "There is but one God." When he lays himself down to sleep, there is revealed to his understanding, "But one Being rules thy destinies; protected by Him thou needest not fear evil; his hand is ready to snatch thee from destruction; his mercy will watch over thee whilst thou sleepest, his angels will guard thy head." And when he rises in the morning, the rejoicing light, the hum of the insects, the lowing of the cattle, the busy walks of men, will again admonish him, "That one God has made them all." There is no doubt, no uncertainty in your minds, believing sons of Jacob! your God spoke to you on Horeb; He there took you for his heritage, and ever since you have believed in Him, and have borne your willing testimony to the truth of his revealing.

But simple as is the doctrine which constitutes us a people—for it is at last nothing but a single doctrine —"Our God is one," simple as this is, it has not yet been responded to by all mankind. The struggle for the cause of truth is not yet over—the warfare against sound reason is not yet accomplished; and we must needs stand by our defences till the time that it may please the Lord God to enlighten others, even as He

has enlightened us, and to draw all men unto Him by the uniting bonds of a perfect love, of a confiding trust and single-hearted devotion. Simple is the truth; but as yet the empire of error has not yielded; and though many of the absurdities of gross idolatry have faded away, they have in many cases only been changed for others equally pernicious, though perhaps less absurd. We are not, therefore, at liberty to relax in our vigilance, to sleep, sluggard-like, on our posts; but let us loudly proclaim that we are Israelites, that we have full confidence in the word which has been taught us, and that nothing which men can accomplish shall ever wrest it out of our hands. We are God's people by our professing the law which God has written; we are therefore his sacred portion from the other children of Adam, who worship not as we do,—we who are descendants of Jacob, who laboured long and well-nigh hopelessly in Egypt, at the bidding of cruel masters; and by redeeming us thence, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, the Lord established a claim of gratitude upon us more than upon other men, because, in addition to life, the gift to all, we have obtained the gift of everlasting freedom; and this claim we can only repay by our endeavouring, in very truth, to be worthy of being called the lot of his inheritance; to be indeed dutiful servants, faithful to our Master, who seeks only our own happiness; to be obedient children, unwavering in our attachment to our heavenly Parent, who watches over us when our earthly parents slumber, who provides for all our wants, when we are unable to labour, and who enlightens our soul, when other-

wise it would grope in darkness, in uncertainty and despair.

Though we have been thus true to the belief in God, though we have never altogether fallen off upon the ways of error: still it is proper that every individual Israelite ask himself, from time to time, "Have I so deported myself as becomes a member of the heritage of the Lord? Have I been faithful to my trust? Have I honoured the name of my Maker?" Alas! to such questions of self-examination what can we answer? what can the best of us aver in extenuation when the Lord comes to judge, when the Infinite demands an account of our doings on earth? The law which constitutes us Israelites has been confided to us solely for our own welfare. It must not be lost sight of that, for himself, our God could well dispense with our service; for, if we sin, we cannot mar his happiness; if we are righteous, what do we add to his glory? And withal this, how have we conducted ourselves from the day of our first institution as a people, from the day that we each took our position as intelligent agents in the ranks of mankind? The truth will force itself upon our conviction that, as a people, we have ever neglected the obedience due to our Benefactor, and, as individuals, we have not fulfilled the demands which our Father has a right to exact at our hands. There is always one delusive idea which has led so many to destruction: it is, that belief is everything, acts, ceremonies, or actual obedience nothing. Were it, to discuss this subject as its importance deserves, that a MAN had ordained our laws, it might, perhaps, be pardonable in us to select from our system what we will keep and what we will

reject; there might, in that case, be little acts which could safely be neglected, and important deeds which should claim our especial attention. But this is not our case; no man originated our duties, no human reason invented our belief. In both these branches it is God alike who speaks to his portion, his people. He assigns in both the lot for Jacob his heritage. When he says, "On the first day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation; no manner of work shall ye do; it shall be a day of the sounding of the cornet unto you," He deserves as much attention, as when He proclaims himself the Lord Eternal, who had redeemed us from the iron furnace out of Egypt. In "Thou shalt make thyself fringes on the four corners of thy garment wherewith thou coverest thyself" He expresses as much his absolute will, as when He ordains, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." To us one act may appear great, one idea more sublime than the other; but what is our reason that we should confide in it? is our judgment always so certain in mere earthly affairs, that we could safely confide our eternal peace to so frail a refuge? How vain is our thinking, how painful our unassisted reflection, our own research in pursuit of physical discoveries in the ordinary affairs of life; how often are we compelled to throw aside all that we have done already as labour lost; and when apparently near the end of our goal, how often are we forced to commence anew, with no better hopes of avoiding failure, the painful toil without which we cannot succeed at all? And still, in matters of religion, our judgment is to be infallible, our own opinion our unerring guide! It requires no argu-

ment to prove the fallacy of such reasoning; the very statement of the case is refutation enough of this pernicious self-delusion. It becomes, therefore, our imperative duty to measure our obligations, not by our reasoning, but by the evident record of the Bible, and the explanation which we have received concerning the same from our forefathers. We must, in short, take for our direction what God has taught, and endeavour to shape our course undeviatingly by this blessed guiding-star, which has been assigned to us to render sure our steps upon the dangerous road of life, and to bring the tossed bark of our national hopes, in its tempestuous voyage upon the treacherous ocean of human events, to the secure haven of rest. And let history, both individual and national, speak for us, whether there is not always safety in adhering closely to the observances, and death, yea, death and destruction, in the deviation from the statutes which the Lord has written for our improvement.

It is true that there may be unenlightened men who cling to mere ceremonials, the mere outside of religion, as the spirit thereof, who see nothing in a ceremony but the act itself, whilst the essence, the reason of its institution, is hidden from their eyes. But, foolish as these are, they are only guilty of the same folly, which the worldlings commit in neglecting the observances, because they see nothing therein of paramount importance; for these, too, omit to look into the essence of the religion of God. Let us see. What did God wish to establish by choosing Israel? a monotheistic race, a people believing in one God, confiding in no other saviour than the Creator himself, who proclaimed to themselves his law. What

was the condition of mankind at that period and since? A constant struggling to destroy this faith, and to build up in its stead a series of errors, all more or less pernicious in their nature; because they hated and yet hate the religion of Israel. For the belief in a simple unity destroys at once all artificial systems of theology: as soon as you have once heard what our religion is, you understand it just as well as the most learned. There is an end to fraud, to tyranny over the spirit. This, however, it was precisely what God intended to teach: all his people should alike know Him, as they were all alike bound to serve Him. When, therefore, this religion became known to the world without, it was met at every step by the contempt, the ridicule, and, not rarely, the persecution of those who differed from us. How was it, then, to be preserved intact amidst this unceasing warfare? Was there to be exerted a constant miraculous power, to act as an antagonizing principle to the opposition it had to contend against? How otherwise could the few monotheists be preserved and distinguished among the many who believed, and still believe, in a plurality of gods in some shape or other? The Lord, therefore, chose his own means to perpetuate his religion; He bound it firmly and forever to certain observances, which should distinguish his followers among mankind as a people peculiarly devoted to his service. So we find with circumcision, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." By the Sabbath, "For it is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever." With the prohibited food, "And ye shall sanctify yourselves and be holy; for I am holy; and you shall not defile yourselves on any creeping thing

which creepeth on the earth; for I am the Lord who bring you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God, and you shall be holy, because I am holy." With the fringes it is said, "In order that you may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God." We could multiply proofs; but it is enough, with what has been adduced already, to establish as an incontrovertible fact, that the ceremonial observances have a meaning far above the mere act which is produced by them; they are to revert back on the spirit, render it free from the pollution of the external world, by ever and anon impressing on it the recollection of God, of his miracles, and of his revelation. Observe, brethren, on every occasion wherein Moses, by the order of God, gives a prominent reason for any observance, it is, that we have been bondmen, meaning the act is demanded as an evidence of gratitude, because we have received signal and undeserved benefits from our God and King. The observance, moreover, of the precepts will necessarily make a distinction between us who practise them, and those who are not bound thereby. The heathen, the Mahomedan, the Nazarene, can have no interest in keeping the Passover, the Pentecost, the New Year, and the other festivals; they are meaningless to them; they have never been bondmen in Egypt; they never stood at the foot of Sinai to receive a law from the God of heaven; they never had a revealed law to offend against, so that they would have to seek atonement by the humiliation pointed out in the law. To them, therefore, the sound of the cornet is an unharmonious noise; but, to us, it speaks in the voice of a messenger of peace: "Return, ye

backsliding children! why will you die, O house of Israel?" To them it would be useless to fast an entire day without bread, without water to pass their lips; but our fathers sinned grievously after receiving the law on Horeb; they speedily departed from the good way, and made themselves a molten calf to worship the same; it was then, after many days spent in prayer by the prophet, that it was the pleasure of the Most High to stay the just indignation, and to withhold the destruction which had been deserved by the senseless multitude; and to have a constant memorial of the pardoning mercy of God, He instituted the *tenth* day of the *seventh* month as a perpetual ordinance, for a fast throughout our generations in all our dwellings. To fast, then, is to acknowledge before the Searcher of hearts that we acknowledge our unworthiness; and our dwelling an entire day in God's house is a confession that we prize his favour above all other treasures; and we shall then also be reminded of the sublime experience of Israel in all ages, that it was one God who rendered our limbs free from slavery; one God and the same Being who delivered our souls from the bonds of darkness by the publication of his law; and one God and the same Being who, undeserving though we were, blotted out our sins without demanding sacrifice or atonement, and refused thus to exterminate those who had so daringly defied his holy will. This ordinance was to be observed throughout all times, in all places: what is this but to say, that everywhere there is one and only one God? at all times there is and can only be one revelation? Thus the ideas of the Unity and Revelation were to go hand in hand, and together they

were to bless the heritage of the Lord with abundant light and peace, and render them forever and aye free from the corruptions of superstition, idolatry, and false belief, those awful plagues of the mind, which have at all times exerted so baneful an influence on the souls of men, and the fate of empires.

The few observations just laid before you on one branch of the ceremonies, could easily be extended to all others: the illustrations chosen were merely those that first presented themselves to my mind, without much weighing whether better and stronger ones might not readily be found. So pure is the religion of Heaven, that it requires no eloquent defence to the thinking; and could all men be only equally instructed, it would assume at once the empire over all souls, and banish in a moment all error from the face of the earth. That this will ultimately result in the course of events, admits of no possible doubt; for God has spoken: "On that day the Lord shall be acknowledged ONE, and his name shall be ONE." It might perhaps then be that the ceremonies, being no longer of the important signification which they were hitherto, could be safely abolished or supplied by others of God's ordaining. But this too is doubtful, and we have no evidence that any changes will ever be made in our religion, as regards Israel. At all events now the causes of the institution yet operate; we are to this hour surrounded by those who differ widely from us, whose thoughts of God are not those which the Bible contains, and who reject the law of Israel. If we were then to relax in our observances, if we were to break down the lines of demarcation which separate and surround us: we would at once

yield up many of our members to amalgamation with the inimical world at large; we would thus step by step obliterate the heritage of the Lord, and destroy Israel from being his people, his witnesses, the bearers of his unity, unto the end of time. But we are commanded to be faithful; we have met with fearful retribution for neglecting the sacred charge confided to us: what should then be our course? Uphold the system of the ceremonies in all its vigour, and enjoin, by living instruction and faithful practice, upon all the branches of the house of Israel, to be true to the standard of faith which we have received, and not to depart to the right or to the left from the way which the Lord our God has commanded us. Every action, even the smallest, performed in the name and unto the glory of God, will act as a purification of our heart, it will render it sensitive to the impression of righteousness, and will rivet closer and closer our union with the Father above, who wills to be sanctified in the assemblies of his people. Only thus can we be the heritage of the God of Jacob, when we are faithful ourselves, and draw others after us, the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish, to come in with us, to enter the sanctuary together, to fall down in humility, to worship with an undivided spirit the ONE who is alone in heaven and on earth, who is unchangeable and pure, full of mercy and truth, and whose will called forth the earth, that it stood, and who spread out alone the canopy of heaven.

Brethren! we are standing this day at the commencement of a new year from the creation. A few hours ago we hailed the coming season, and prayed

that it might be blessed with abundance from before the God of our fathers. Let us hope that He has heard our prayer, and that the year which we have just commenced may be one of peace and plenty, of righteousness and acceptability, in which union and good-will may prevail among all our brethren, and they be free from the enmity and attacks of the enemies of their faith. But we also have a duty to perform. We must not expect happiness, either temporal or permanent, without deserving it. Let us then arouse ourselves to additional vigilance; let us lay hold of the law of God, as a firm and only support during our earthly trials, as our only guide to yon realms of happiness, which our Father opens for us beyond the confines of the gloomy grave, which is destined to receive us when our earthly pilgrimage is drawn to a close. Dark indeed will the passage be, if we are without the grace of God; but a joyous awakening will be ours, if we have obtained his forgiveness, if our death has atoned for the wrong we have done.—Be watchful over your conduct; listen to the voice of admonition which is implanted within you; but above all, study the word of truth with unwavering faith, and follow its behests during every day of your life. So shall your prayers be heard on the Day of Atonement, and whenever you humble yourselves before your Father, and He will approvingly accept your repentance, and say by the blessed influence his peace exerts over the soul of man: "I have pardoned, as thou hast spoken."

And may the unbought grace of the Lord, which exceeds all blessings, be ours, now and forever; and

may his holy Name be praised through our humble means, and be to Him alone ascribed the glory, worship, and adoration from all mankind, from eternity to eternity. Amen.

Elul 29th. } 5605.
Oct'r 1st. }

DISCOURSE XI.

SPIRIT AND PRACTICE.

O God of our fathers! how shall mortals speak thy praise? Our eyes have not seen Thee, so that we could represent Thee by any outward image; and our reason is too weak to comprehend the workings of thy unbounded understanding, which comprises all in one view, which surveys the innermost thoughts of man and the most secret things of nature. Shall we recount what we deem thy greatness? shall we chaunt thy glory as we deem it fitting? How inadequate even then would our words be, how powerless the speech which Thou hast given us! Silence is therefore the only meed of praise which the son of earth can bring to Thee, the acknowledgment that he cannot express what he conceives commensurate with thy greatness, that his thoughts cannot fly upwards to the height of thy throne. Yet we cannot forbear to speak of Thee, when we survey the heavens and the earth which Thou hast formed; the sun and the moon, which are radiant by thy light; the fields

which are clothed with verdure by thy bountiful hand; the skies which drop with rain, which distil the dew by Thee spread abroad. Yea, we speak of Thee, as the child does of his father whose kindness he perceives, but the extent of whose care he cannot comprehend. And as children, therefore, of thy love we thank Thee; as creatures who have sprung from Thee we feel the debt we owe to thy bounty; as mortals weak and powerless of themselves we ask of Thee to aid us in our labours, to save us from peril. And O let this truth be deeply impressed on us, that with Thee we are well guarded, without Thee lost and perishing; so that we may subdue ourselves to listen to thy instruction, and follow Thee on the path whereon Thou goest before us; and may we thus be made acceptable to Thee, and be accounted worthy to abide in thy tabernacle forever. Amen.

Brethren!

It has been told to you that our religion opens no hope to the sinner; that it is merely a system of ceremonies, without the spirit being quickened by the prospects of a bright future; and that hence it was doomed to yield before the rising light of a new and better dispensation. But if we examine the basis of our religion and trace its history, we shall discover that neither is it defective in spirituality, nor has it ceased to be acceptable to its Promulgator, and that consequently we are bound to yield obedience to it alone, to the exclusion of aught else, and to profess nothing which it does not inculcate. What is it that gives religion a spirituality? Simply that which connects it with the highest Spirit, with God himself.

Now the question arises, How is this to be effected? What thoughts, words, or actions are calculated to produce it? Must these be altogether abstract from the things of life, of ordinary life in which we move, or must they, may they be allied to our ordinary avocations and reflections? In other words, must religion leave us men as it finds us, or must it make us something different from what we were from our origin? Let us consider. Who implanted in us our human feelings? God. Who assigned us a sphere on earth for labour and exertion? The same beneficent Being. Is it therefore probable that every thing human is abhorrent to Him? will He accept nothing that man does as man? To presume this, would be to argue that God created a being so imperfect in all its parts that it could not be pleasing to Him in the state which his own power had produced; or in other words, we would, by this assumption, arraign the wisdom and goodness of the Lord, and condemn Him for the unskilfulness of his handiwork. But we are taught that all the works of God are perfect: "And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good;" consequently man, as he was then found and is to this day, is included in the creation which its Maker approved of in his wisdom at the completion of all his work. We may indeed maintain that in man exists the perfection of the creative wisdom discoverable in all nature; he is endowed with the twofold power of good and evil; whereas in all others one or the other alone prevails. Those pure spirits who are the messengers of God, the invisible guardians that are around us, who save us from stumbling though our foot slips, when we do the will of

Heaven, are only intent on obeying the mandate which directs their flight to the brightest sun, the most distant world, or which bids them to watch by the pillow at the head of the sleeping infant. The brute creature has no longing for higher felicity, it obeys merely the instinct which bids it to eat, to drink, to sleep, to seek warmth, and to defend itself against its enemies. It may have higher thoughts; but these, if they do exist, are unknown to us. Yet in its sphere it fulfils the behest of its Creator; it is a part of the chain of which all that exist are only connecting links. And man stands between these two orders; he has aspirations which carry him above the vault of the skies, that seem to bend like an arched tent over his head, beyond the distant worlds that glitter and shine before his eyes every night in brilliant array all around him; at the same time that he feels drawn to the earth, its pleasures and its cares, nay the very animal enjoyments which constitute the happiness of the inferior creatures, which were assigned to him as his servants. But in all these strivings, whether they be merely mental or merely physical, or whether both these energies are brought into play, he is not counteracting the designs of the Creator, whilst he, to benefit himself, does not abuse the gifts which have been vouchsafed unto him.

How then should we become pleasing to God? by abandoning the ordinary walks of life? by mortifying constantly the human nature that is within us? shall we fly into solitudes or deserts to devote our days to prayer and our nights to contemplation? No doubt, many an ascetic has thought that thus only could he unite himself to the spirit of God; and he

therefore became something unlike man in general, and fancied that in his withdrawal from all that makes life lovely he was making himself an object especially worthy of the divine favour. Independently of this course being a virtual arraignment of God's wisdom in making man a social being, it would, if generally followed, destroy the human race from the earth, and render populous towns heaps of ruins, and smiling fields howling desolations. And it will not do to argue, that this duty of a spiritual existence is incumbent on the few elect only; for this would be to assert that different duties were assigned to different men; whereas, if we take the Bible for our guide, we shall discover that there is but one law and one species of ordinance for all believers. There are, it is true, different duties assigned to different individuals, so far as their public character is concerned; but in personal acts of righteousness there is no difference whatever between the young and the old, the slave and the prince; all are alike children of the Creator, all are alike objects of his care.

So then it must be clear that as *men* we must be pleasing to God, as persons living in society, as members of the human family who have rights and demands upon others, and duties and obligations to discharge towards all their fellow-beings. If therefore we wish to learn how to become united to the Spirit, or to lead a spiritual life, we shall find that it must be done by our ordinary thoughts, words, and actions: these, when only used for an every-day purpose, or worse, if applied to profane uses, cannot be considered as being otherwise than mere animal functions, though they may be inaccessible to the brute; but

when they are prompted by a fear of God acting constantly to give an unction of purity to them, they become spiritualized, they rise from common thoughts, words and acts in a proper appreciation of our Maker's goodness, and they are converted into portions of worship of the Most High. Our thoughts will, whilst dwelling upon the best means of securing our temporal happiness even, endeavour to take a colouring from the revealed religion which is the light to our souls; our words, though they relate to our usual avocations, will partake of the purity which religion imparts; and our acts, though they are the promptings of such thoughts and corresponding with words as just mentioned, will be within the limits of God's will, and therefore conducive to holiness, and the engrafting of the love of the Lord in our innermost heart.

If we now survey the Jewish religion in its whole extent, it will present to us a twofold feature, the one of belief, the religion of the thought, heart or soul, the other of action, the religion of the outward man. What does the Bible offer us as a duty of belief, or faith? It impresses us in its very first words with the idea of the existence of the Creator, of the origin of all things from one Fountain. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This acknowledgment forces us to believe that whatever exists is here for a wise purpose, though this be unknown to us. The existence of what we commonly call evil, is a part of the creation, an embodiment of the will of the Lord. Sickness, sorrow, grief, death, are evils as we call them, they affect us unpleasantly they interrupt the even tenor of our earthly career.

Who would wish to have his body racked with pain? who would choose to see his hopes disappointed? who would desire to weep for the loss of friends, near and beloved? who would, if he were able to live always at ease and in affluence, in perennial youth, surrounded by those he loves, desire to throw off the mortal coil and revisit the world of spirits? No one. —And yet all these visitations are the work of God, and as He is the Being who bestows blessings, so is He also the one who withdraws them; who dashes the cup of earthly bliss from our lips, in order, not merely to torment us, because He is envious of our happiness, as though the sight of human joy were hateful to the Deity (an idea entertained by the heathen), but because He wishes to draw us to himself, to perfect in us the work which He has commenced by giving us life and reason, and a religion to direct us how we are to act. "And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good;" yea, the germs of evil, of sorrow and death which He had implanted in the creation, these too were very good, necessary elements of the structure which had just sprung, finished, from his mighty word. And what know we of the issue of the so-called evil? does the diamond know in its rough state of the object of the lapidary in removing the dull and sombre surface, to show forth its nature in all the brilliancy of which it is capable? what knows the canvas of the purpose of the limner in covering it with at first unsightly colours, which will hand down the master's name to after-ages? And as little as those inanimate objects understand the reason of their transformation, do we know the purposes of the changes to which we are

subject in the hands of our God. Who knows precisely what life is? who knows what death is? We can explain them to us in a manner to satisfy us that we have given some rational explanation; but to a certainty no one has ever yet cleared up the mystery, how certain agents are uncongenial to animated existence, how the very things which destroy life, as water and fire, are absolutely requisite to its continuance, how certain medicaments will restore health in a measure whilst others, similar in appearance with these, at once put an end to this curious conformation which constitutes our existence here. And with these facts before us, we would still pretend to judge our Maker's work? to criticize the Creator's ways? What does therefore our religion teach us? Simply, that at all times and under all circumstances we should refer our cause to Him, to rely upon his mercy to aid us, if aid be the thing best suited to our ultimate happiness. "Though He slay me, yet would I trust in Him," are the words of Job, that prototype of all patient suffering, the man who felt that his Redeemer lived and that his witness was in heaven, though his body was covered with loathsome disease, though his breath had become corrupt, and his friends had forsaken him. It impresses us with the conviction that we are not suffering without a beneficial object; but that as the refiner melts the metal which he desires to purify of foreign admixture, thus does the Lord send us tribulations to cleanse us in the furnace of affliction, that we may proceed thence purified of the leprosy of wickedness which so often attaches itself to us in our moments of ease and prosperity.

We could say a great deal more of the spiritual nature of our faith, of the thoughts of belief proper which a Jew, who deserves the name, is bound to feel in quality of his being such; but it needs not to demonstrate that the purest ideas of the Godhead are revealed in the Bible, and consequently are a portion of the system to which the sons of Israel must subscribe if they desire to be faithful.

But let us revert to the other portion, the religion of acts, and what shall we see in that? We shall discover the superabundant mercy of God in his having imparted to us many commandments through which every act of our life can be hallowed. In our labour we are commanded, "Six days mayest thou labour and do all thy work;" here we are enjoined by Providence to look for the support of our life to a labour continued for a specific portion of every week. "But," he continues, "the seventh day is a day of rest in honour of the Lord thy God, then shalt thou do no manner of work." When the lawful period for labour has elapsed, when the time allotted to man for his own pleasure and gain has expired, his God comes in to claim *his* share, the day consecrated to higher thoughts, when man is to become a witness that he believes that the world was produced by an omnipotent Creator, and that to this great Being he is willing to devote a portion of his life, not because reason demands of him to repose one day out of every seven, but and only because the will of the Lord demands it. Again, we are told in the text in which we have read to-day:

ומוראכם וחתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ ועל כל
עוף השמים בכל אשר תרמש האדמה ובכל דגי הים

בידכם נתנו : כל רמש אשר הוא חי לכם יהיה
לאכלה כירק עשב נתתי לכם את כל : בר׳ ט׳ ב׳ ג׳ :

"And the fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the heavens; whatever is that moveth upon the earth, and all the fishes of the sea are delivered into your hand.—Every moving thing that liveth shall be yours for food; even as the green herbs have I given you all things." Genesis ix. 2, 3.

Here we see how God gave to Noah and his sons dominion over every creature, how all were to dread the face of man, *that one* of the animated beings for whom Providence expresses an especial solicitude. Moreover they obtained herewith the permission to convert the animals into food for themselves, subject only not to eat the blood with the flesh, nor to partake of an animal till its life be extinct. But to Israel a new dispensation was afterwards given. Animal flesh might be eaten as before; certain classes however were interdicted, because the Lord had separated them unto us as unclean. The table of the Master of the universe is abundantly decked with viands of a thousand forms. He invites his servants to the banquet; they are welcome guests in his domain; but He tries their faith whether they will follow Him, or obey merely the blind instinct of the brute within them, which bids them to gratify their base appetite, no matter whether the Lord of life permits or prohibits the enjoyment. Yes, the Sabbath is a ceremony, so are the prohibitions of what our law calls unclean; but if we obey, are they not evidences of our faith, tokens whether we will follow the Lord who is wise, great, and good? Wise in that He dis-

played unsearchable wisdom in the design of the mighty structure and organization which we term the universe; great, because He executed what his wisdom had foreshadowed; and good, because he sustains all with his mercy, and provides for and cares for every thing that has life, "He openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of all living." And to Him we should not yield obedience? his will we should dispute? doubt whether He could ordain such laws? be obdurate because they meet not our views of right? because we deem ourselves hardly dealt with if we do what we are taught God has ordained? O, no! it is in our every-day conduct, in our every-day words, in our every-day thoughts, that we can best serve our Maker; for herein we best display that we are totally devoted to his will, that we surrender ourselves solely to his guidance. And by so doing we become united to Him in spirit; since our soul, the spirit which will alone live, the spark of life which is the last work of creation,* will become more closely allied to her Creator, more purified than the want of obedience could effect. It matters not therefore that the acts are trivial, that the words we employ are few, that the thoughts are those of the unlearned, of the children: they are all springing from the only true source of religion—from a willing obedience to the behest of the Giver of our law. Ceremonies, therefore, are not matters of indifference, which could be dispensed with when we have greater concerns to occupy our time, when we can bring much stronger faith than hitherto, when

* "And the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and blew in his nostrils the soul of life." Genesis ii. 7.

we can offer more elevated devotion than we did in our early years; for it were idle to ascertain what degree of such feelings would make up the requisite amount of theoretical piety, which would outweigh and therefore render useless our former ceremonial conformity. We have not in the whole Bible moreover, a single sentence which could demonstrate the uselessness of active obedience. It is true, the Scriptures inveigh against mere observance of certain rites. But why is that? Simply because the spirit of righteousness is wanting in their execution. So did our fathers during the time of the first temple; they transgressed the precepts of the Law by being guilty of injustice, bloodthirstiness, pride, idolatry, and incest; and still they kept up a show of outward religion by resorting to the temple on festivals and solemn days with sacrifices and presents, as though by this means they could wipe out the guilt of their misdeeds. But where was it ever said that acts of obedience, "if accompanied with good faith, with a sincere virtuous course of life, would not be acceptable to God?" Did not the Lord himself ordain the sacrifices, the festivals, the ablutions, and other ceremonies of our law? how then can we say that they are not necessary elements of a religious course of life whenever they are practicable? And that some of them are not so now, is owing to our not possessing the temple where alone the sacrifices could be brought; but whatever is not connected with the place which the Lord has chosen, is obligatory upon us and our descendants to the latest generation.

There is much more to be said upon this prolific subject; we have merely given in this lecture the pref-

ace, so to say, of what is of vast importance to us all as Israelites who are anxious to seek the righteousness of the Lord. But if permitted to investigate farther, it is my purpose to present to you my views hereafter more at length. In the mean time let us hope that the truth on which we have been dwelling will sink deeply into our soul, to produce fruits of obedience and acceptability which will have a permanent influence on our life, and cause us to follow more readily in the path which God has marked out as the road of our salvation. Amen.

Tishry 30th. } 5606.
October 31st. }

DISCOURSE XII.

GOD OUR BENEFACTOR.*

Father of Israel, Almighty God! vouchsafe in thy holiness to accept the humble offering of thanks which thy creatures bring unto thy Name in the place devoted to thy service. Humble, indeed, is the gift, poor are they who bring it; but what are unto Thee a thousand oxen slain near the altar, rivers of oil brought unto thy sanctuary, mingled with countless masses of meat-offerings? Yes, were all the earth an altar, every inhabitant thereof a priest, to officiate: still would not thy greatness be thereby ex-

* Delivered on Thanksgiving day, November 27th, 1845, Heshvan, 5606, at the Synagogue Mikvé Israel, in Philadelphia.

alted, and insufficient would be the worship of man. How much more unworthy of acceptance then is our worship: we come with empty hands, with loveless lips, with unconverted hearts; and yet we feel that we are thy debtors, for the breath which we breathe, for the light that rejoices our eyes, for the food which sustains us, for the fountain that quenches our thirst. Were it that thy mercy could be prompted only by our merits, we should then be without the goodness which every where surrounds us; but Thou waitest not for our service, Thou heapest upon us benefits, in order that we may know thy mercy, and hasten to throw ourselves altogether upon thy unending bounty. Thou drawest thy children unto Thee with the bonds of love, while they in their ingratitude turn a deaf ear to thy admonition. O do Thou, Father! aid us against ourselves; teach us to feel that we are only here through Thee, that in Thee only we can live; that with thy protection we are shielded against all ills; but that without thy blessing we are lost amidst prosperity, perishing in the midst of the bloom of youth. And grant that the benefits which we have received may be deeply impressed on our minds, that the abundant harvest may tell unto us a message of thy being our Benefactor, and the absence of any public calamity impress us with the conviction that thy goodness has watched over this land, and given it security and peace. Do also enlighten us and our rulers, not to rely upon our own strength, and become thereby forgetful of the Source whence all the greatness which we enjoy has flowed. Let us be made conscious of the vanity of human striving to render prosperity permanent, and to avert the com-

ing of the evil which has ever assailed and overthrown all enterprises and states which were not guided by thy wisdom. Let us also entreat Thee to give permanence to the free institutions which we here enjoy; watch, O watch! over the destinies of this land, that never may the sceptre of a tyrant be swayed here, while the people remain fit for self-government; and let thy wisdom aid in the councils of the state, that never the equitable boon of civil and religious liberty be denied to any of the inhabitants: so that this favoured land, at least, may be left as a refuge for the sons of thy chosen Abraham, whither they can flee when oppression threatens them in other countries of their sojourning. We ask this, O Father! because Thou hast sworn by thy holy name never to cast off thy people; and let us know in this that we have indeed found grace in thy eyes, and that Thou wilt preserve us entire, until the day when Thou wilt do again great things before our eyes, and redeem us a second time, as when Thou didst take us away from Egypt, to be unto Thee a people, to proclaim thy glory. And grant that all the mourners for Zion may be comforted by thy return to thy temple, when they shall again behold the crown placed on the head of David's son thy anointed, the man in whose days Judah shall be saved and Israel dwell securely. Amen.

Brethren!

We are assembled here this day, not in obedience to a usual duty of our religion, to recite the ordinary set form of prayers in the house of God amidst the congregation of the faithful; but in obedience to the recommendation of the chief magistrate of this com-

monwealth, who has requested all the religious denominations under his jurisdiction to meet this day, in their several places of worship, to return thanks unto the Giver of all good, for the many blessings which this land enjoys, blessings derived only from his bounty. In responding to a call so ample, in a union of gratitude to the Creator, the children of Israel cannot be wanting; they too feel that they are recipients of goodness, they too feel impelled to come and worship Him who alone is powerful to bless, and to withhold the blessing. Indeed all around us tokens of prosperity greet the eye. The fields have teemed with plenty, and health has been given to the land, and the ravages of the pestilence in its various forms have not been experienced in the past season in any portion of this extensive country. There have, it is true, been partial evils; and death, as is usual, has been busy in the haunts of man, to carry away those doomed to fall before his sword; but beyond this, the common lot of all men, there has no tear been shed over the many slain in one day by the ravages of fell disease, of unusual and therefore more fearful forms. And in addition to this, peace has been preserved unto us; and the sound of the deadly artillery has not wakened us out of our slumbers, and foreign foemen have not assailed the towns of the seaborder, nor overrun the fields of the west. It is well, therefore, that we pause every now and then, to survey all that we have received, and trace it to the Source whence it has sprung. For how apt is vainglorious man to imagine, that it is his foresight which has guarded him against evil; that it is his skill in tilling the soil, which has produced plenty; that it is

his prudence in diplomacy which has preserved to him the blessings of peace. But little does he thus understand his own position; little is he acquainted with his own want of knowledge and power, if he thus argues. Let him survey the world around him: he will find men as intelligent as himself fail in their enterprises; he will find *himself* foiled in many a darling wish, for want of the means to carry it into effect; he will discover how constantly he incurs the enmity of others, when he never thought of giving offence; he will see how he often plants, and tends carefully the gradual development of the tender shoot, and has yet to experience a sudden pang of disappointment, at seeing it sicken, wither, and die. And such a one as he will dare to presume that success is the necessary result of his prudence, skill, and exertion? that failure was not to be expected, because his plans had been well laid? But if this applies to single individuals, where a man has all the elements in his own hands, where all the instruments are at once accessible to him: how much more is this the case in large communities, such as this, diversified by soil and climate, by political institutions, and the character and pursuit of the inhabitants, having different national origins, and professing the most contradictory dogmas of belief and religion! How is it possible for any one to say that success can be looked for as a necessary consequence from any system of industry, or plan of management? It is readily admitted that a correct system of government, and proper combinations of the industrial resources of a country, go very far to render success probable; but beyond probability nothing can be assumed. Look at the state

of the northern portion of this vast republic, where the population is yet sparse, and the climate cold and humid; and then at the centre, where immense cities stand as if raised by magic, in a comparatively brief period, teeming with a busy crowd, in the enjoyment of a mild climate and the refinements of high civilization; and again at the extreme south, where cold is scarcely known, where products are plentifully brought forth, which are required by other sections to carry on their industrial schemes, or to supply their domestic wants; and then contrast the difference in the character of the people, of the labourers which produce the wealth in the cold north, and those who labour, but not for themselves, in the smiling south:—and then say, that it is mere human skill, a well-organized uniform plan which has produced the success which calls forth so much felicitation and boast among the people, over the happiness and prosperity of their republic. There are men elsewhere equally industrious, equally well informed as those who live here. But how fares it with them? Tidings after tidings are brought to us, that their harvest has failed, that the staff of bread has been broken to them, that all the arts of modern cultivation have failed to cause the earth to yield her products, and the tree of the field to give its fruit. Whilst here the sun shone brightly, ripening by his beneficent rays the waving grain, and the blushing fruit of the tree, there was elsewhere a cold and unpropitious season, and deluges of unseasonable rain destroyed the well-founded hopes of the husbandman, and brought confusion into the minds of the counsellors, and the terror of famine into the heart of the most

indifferent. Ay, it was God's blessing which has been given to us; it was his will to shower his beneficence over this land, in order to give it plenty, to shield it from the calamity which threatens other countries.

It is also his wisdom which inspired the wise founders of the government under which we live, to confer equal rights upon all the inhabitants; which taught them to look for the model of their institutions, not to the feudal ages, where a few were lords and the many serfs, bondmen tied to the soil, where the judgment of life and death over his menials was surrendered into the hands of the wealthy landed proprietor,—but to that holy Book which serves us as the guide of our life. It must not be forgotten that, however it may be disguised by those inimical to Revelation, the early settlers in this country, on fleeing hither from persecution, came strongly imbued with the spirit of the Bible. Perhaps they misunderstood some of its injunctions; for they applied to themselves erroneously the name and destiny of Israel, taught as they had been by persons unacquainted with our interpretation of the word of God; but one thing is certain, they brought with them the stern morality which is enjoined on us, and they carried in their hearts an invincible hatred to tyrannical rulers and their concomitant, an aristocracy of favoured counsellors. They found that the word of God spoke of all men as equals; and this principle became unto them the corner-stone of their political superstructure. And after the follies of experimentalists in self-government had exhausted themselves in the intolerance which most enthusiasts feel for those differ-

ing from them in politics and religion; and when the light of science taught them the unreasonableness of certain fancies they had at first adopted: there was left, as the fruit of their early habits and religious training, a strong love of justice, and an unconquerable opposition to any arbitrary assumption of power. And though all the early inhabitants of the country had not the same education, since even many had been taught from infancy to despise the strict notions of those they called Puritans: still did the unbending character of these and others akin to them in their views so strongly impress itself upon the habits of the whole people, that they easily amalgamated into one homogeneous nation; and what the one portion lacked perhaps in tolerance, was supplied by the amiable and kindly disposition of the other towards all God's creatures; and those who might perhaps have desired to form the new government upon ideas borrowed from abroad, were overawed by the fierce and just rebuke of those who could imagine no liberty where all freemen had not an equal right. If even then some might doubt the biblical theory that Providence rules the affairs of men through the spirit of the rulers: no one can gainsay that the principles of liberty, here enjoyed, are directly traceable to the revelation given through Moses, a revelation which has broken the chains of many nations, and will go on in its mission, prospering in its efforts, until the fear of tyrants and the cause for war shall be removed forever from the face of the earth.

The subject is one well worthy of a religious contemplation on a day set apart as one of general thanksgiving for benefits received from God. Contrast the

present position of the Union and its struggle for independence, with the present condition and struggle for liberty in a people claiming a higher distinction for refinement and literature than has ever been enjoyed here. They too weened that it was theirs to strike for freedom; to overthrow the fabric of ages, the pillars of which had become rotten, and the superstructure of which had been rendered tottering and unsightly. But they were without the proper foundation for liberty. They had been trained in monkish superstition; and their nobles were tinctured with gross vices, and many of them despised all the religious forms which they outwardly practised, and made them not unfrequently the subject of jest and pleasantry. When therefore the oppressed masses claimed the rights and privileges of freemen, of which they had so long been deprived, and when concessions were wrung one by one from the weak hands of the rulers, the people knew not how to use their new-born freedom; they deemed it to be inherent in licentiousness only; the very worship of God was considered as homage unsuited to lovers of liberty, and every one who differed from the arbitrary standard set up by the mob-leaders who had assumed the sway, like the scum which rises to the surface of the waters amidst the fury of the tempest, was deemed an enemy of the commonwealth, and suffered confiscation, banishment or death, just as his merciless judges might decree in the name of liberty. There was no element of freedom among the men of that land; they had long dealt in wild speculations on the rights of man; but they had no respect for the earliest record of rational liberty, of obedience to laws regularly enacted, of

order in legislation, of a state based upon the acknowledged chieftaincy of the great Creator. The consequences which therefore ensued might easily have been foreseen; one crime brought on the other, one convulsion preceded the other; and, when the men of blood had in their mad rage destroyed each other, the exhausted and wearied people sunk into the arms of a most relentless tyranny without a struggle, glorying in the glitter of conquest over foreign foes, till their own land was at length overrun by the very armies over which they had triumphed in a hundred battles. But I am not going to deliver a political lecture; our object can only be to exhibit the power of the word of God over the happiness of mankind, and to employ the reflections thus evoked to attune our hearts to ascribe due glory and praise to the great Being, through whose wisdom guided, the patriots of the revolutionary struggle succeeded in framing a plan of government, the chief excellence whereof is derived from the law of Israel, and which recognizes the broad principle of universal equality in the eyes of the law of all its citizens, and maintains the right of each individual to think for himself on matters of belief and religion, and lays no restriction upon the conduct of all residents, whether citizens or aliens, provided their acts do not interfere with the public welfare, and the protection which each individual can of right claim from the laws.

It was the good providence of a number of Jacob's descendants to be here at the time the struggle for emancipation took place. Several, attached by habit and that love for order for which Israelites are generally distinguished, adhered in feeling to the fortunes

of the mother country; but by far the greater number obeyed the call to arms which their native land or the home of their adoption addressed to them; and many of the ensanguined plains were stained with the blood of Israelites who, few though they were in number at that early day, yet shared to the fullest proportion the perils and privations of their countrymen. And when peace at length shed her benignant light again over the land, the claims of Israel were recognized by their fellow-citizens of different persuasions, and equally with others they were admitted to the rights for which they had contended, and this with but few and limited exceptions. There was no distinction recognized in the charter of government which was adopted, after the public mind had called for a united administration of the affairs relating to the whole republic, and it was stipulated that no test should be exacted from any man as the prerequisite for his admission to office, or other honourable employment. We are consequently part of the government of the land, we are not merely tolerated; we do not worship in this house by the sufferance of our more numerous neighbours; but because God has vouchsafed unto us enlargement through the wisdom with which his word had inspired the wise men, who were the fathers of the land. We need not therefore look about in dread, fearing to utter our honest convictions from apprehension of danger from persecution; since there is no man here, since there are no combinations of classes who could legally, without subverting the social compact, arrogate to themselves the right to question us concerning our thoughts, words, and actions, which do not conflict with the political interests and the

good morals of the land. For many centuries had we been deemed enemies to the human race; occasionally tolerated, we were indeed; every now and then we were permitted to erect synagogues to assemble in them for the worship of the Most High. But again was this privilege denied, and we were compelled to quit the country which had afforded us a temporary asylum, plundered of the fruits of industry which we had gathered amidst contumely and degradation. One country, I speak of Holland, having thrown off the iron yoke of Spanish oppression, opened itself to receive our fugitives, who fled from the legal tyranny of Spain, or the lawless violence of a chief of the half-barbarous Cossacks; but unless I err, it was merely the privilege of living unmolested, and of exercising religion freely, which was granted, not political equality. At all events no names of Jewish officers in the service of the United Provinces have ever reached me; though there might nevertheless have been instances of the kind. But it is certain that here, in this country, the Jew was never persecuted; no assault was ever made on him for his religion; and here his belief was as much recognized by the organic law as the system of any other section of the community. In other words, no religion whatever was spoken of as the basis of government; and though the *members of that virtuous assembly were for the greater part truly devout men, they thought it not incumbent on them to fortify their respective dogmas by constitutional safeguards.* They wished to establish a civil government, based upon the soundest principles of morality, and for which speculative religious sanction was not needed, therefore not required.

We will not assert that no religious prejudices exist against us, and that many individuals, if they could, would not gladly restrict us in the rights of liberty of conscience which we enjoy; for, alas! under the best government there are always to be found men who envy their neighbours what they possess in common, and though such as these demand the utmost liberty for themselves, they nevertheless see with a jealous eye others claiming the same right for their part. All I meant to assert is, that the organic law of the country has guaranteed to us the freedom of conscience in its fullest extent; and whilst this constitution endures, which God grant may be for many generations to come, we are safe from molestation from the combined forces of the enemies of Israel and those of equal rights.

Under the protection therefore of the broad shield of political equality, have year after year new accessions been made to the ranks of the followers of Jacob's God. In places where the face of a Jew was a curiosity not many years ago, there are now silently assembling congregations who call themselves servants of the One God. On the margin of the western lakes, where but lately the savage pursued his prey, undisturbed by the presence of the white invader of his solitudes, the great Eternal is invoked in the language of the Land of Canaan, and there where the mighty Mississippi rolls on its unceasing flood into the lap of the ocean, there too they contemplate erecting a habitation for the glory of the Most High God. And they who sought these shores fleeing before unmerited persecution, in need of all things, acquire, by degrees, under the blessing of our Father, the means

of placing themselves beyond want, and of extending the helping hand across the great water to their suffering brethren in the eastern hemisphere. O this land might indeed be made the home of the Jew in his captivity; here indeed he might take deep root, and flourish like the cedars on Lebanon, until it should please the Lord to bring him back to the land which his fathers possessed. But what have we hitherto done? How have we requited the kindness which has been granted to us guilty sinners? In no portion of the earth could Judaism so develop itself as in this; here we might erect schools, send out men to admonish the distant brethren of their duty; here we might pursue honourable employments, embark in agriculture, and devote ourselves to learning, whilst all the time all our acts should be within the permitted circles in which they are circumscribed by the word of God. But this, unfortunately, has not been our course. Many have become tired of the union with Israel, and have wedded themselves to strangers to our faith; and so glaring has this sinning become, that men who devote themselves to draw us into apostacy, have noticed it in their reports, and asserted, at the same time, that American Jews, with few honourable exceptions, are unbelievers in their own laws. It is time for us to awake from our long sleep; we have too long lain drunk from the intoxication of sudden liberty, to which, for centuries, we had been strangers. Difficulties and trials caused us to seek protection from our heavenly Father; but ease and liberty induced us to value ourselves upon our own wisdom, to trust implicitly to our own means for temporal happiness, forgetful that there is a fu-

ture, a future full of bitterness, if our deeds condemn us before the judgment-seat of the everlasting Judge. Had all the Israelites living here exhibited a uniform religious life, been humble in their deportment towards new-comers, and drawn these to them by the bonds of brotherly affection: how powerful a body of believers would now be found all over this land! But the stranger, upon his arrival, saw the neglect of the Sabbath, the profanation of the holy days, the endearment bestowed upon gentile women who had been married, against our laws, to sons of Israel, the apathy with which Jewish females, who had espoused the stranger, were yet tolerated in our houses; and, if his faith was not firm, which state the defective education so many had received abroad only too much promoted, he soon followed in the destructive path which others had trodden before, and he became lost to us; or, if left in our ranks, he added no strength to our cause, and became, in turn, a stumbling-block to others. It is time that we should remove this reproach from us. Other sects employ all their energy to obtain converts from the others, and to extend what they think the benefits of their systems to all whom they can gain over. But we do not desire this. We only wish to confirm those who are Jews, and educate the younger branches, that they, too, may be faithful. Let me, then, appeal to you who are here to-day, to endeavour to correct the evil as far as this may be in your power. You are one of the oldest congregations in the country, and there are some yet among you who were present, more than sixty-four years ago, when the foundation of this house was laid. Let it be, then, your study to endeavour to

lend a helping hand to establish firmly the structure which our predecessors have raised, that it never may want worshippers who will flock hither to offer up their prayers in sincerity to the God of their fathers. This God who has so bountifully blessed you, who has granted you freedom, who has prospered the work of your hands, has a claim to your gratitude: and how can you show this but in your conduct? how better, than by making this conducive to purity in yourselves, and to cleanse others from iniquity? Ay, every Israelite should be a missionary to his fellows, and each should take due care that, in him and his associates, the name of the God of Jacob be sanctified. Much remains to be done; there need be no fear of our speedily exhausting the field of labour; we require improvement in great and small things; and, if we go on unitedly, and act with deference to each other, and all for a holy end: this will, indeed, become a country where the Jew will have his home, where he may travel through its length and its breadth, and find brothers with whom he can worship, of whose food he may partake, and with whom he has the same hopes, with whom he has one God and Father. This is the only thanks which we can bring to the Lord, to exhibit to the world that we are not unworthy of the bounty which we have received, and that, in the days of freedom, we are as closely united to the One in heaven as when chains and sorrows, with enemies all around us on earth, compelled us to raise our eyes on High, and to ask thence for that aid which the enmity of man denied us on earth.

If we thus act, we have the fullest assurance that the Lord will farther bless us abundantly from his ex-

haustless stores; and let, then, calamity befall others we shall be shielded by his mercy, in the words of the inspired writer:

בשש צרות יצילך ובשבע לא יגע בך רע: ברעב
פדך ממות ובמלחמה מידי חרב: — וידעת כי
שלום אהלך ופקדת נוך ולא תחטא: איוב ה' יט' כ' כר':

"In six troubles He will deliver thee, and in the seventh no evil shall touch thee. In famine He will redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword.—And thou shalt know that there is peace in thy tent, and thou shalt number thy house, and shalt miss not one." Job v. 19, 20, 24.

O, it is a holy thing to have the peace of God in our hearts; we then will ascribe success to the Giver of all that we have; we will look to Him for a continuance of his protection; and, if evil befalls the land, we will seek his mercy to protect us amidst the pangs of famine, amidst the deadly arrows of the pestilence, and the fury of the sword. And if we act so, and deserve all this good, how sweetly will our voice of thanksgiving mingle itself with that of all servants of God, of whatever nation, of whatever faith, who with us feel that "it is good to thank the Lord, and to sing praises unto the Most High." And thus will it be proved to all, that Israel is a people deserving of the ancient name of God's children, when they remain faithful as Abraham was faithful, and uphold firmly the law which was given through Moses as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

And may peace and good-will from all men be our portion; and may the countenance of the Lord shine

unto us to enlighten our darkness, and to lead us safely on the path of life even into his presence unto eternity. Amen.

Heshvan 27th. } 5606.
Nov'ber 27th. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

BIBLICAL PRAYERS.

To Thee who dwellest in glory, whose power fills the universe, let all men come to adore and to worship, and cause, O God! that thy fear may be upon all flesh, and that all may resort to Thee only at all times of sorrow and affliction. And vouchsafe, O Father! that thy words may be sweet to our mind, in order that thy doctrines may find a ready response in our heart, and that we may be enabled to place thy favour beyond all the good which is granted to us on earth; so that our labours here may bear fruit hereafter, fruit of imperishable beauty, which is not liable to corruption, which experiences no decay. Amen.

Brethren!

In the first book of our blessed Scriptures, the inheritance which God gave to his people Israel, to be theirs till the end of time, theirs as a birthright from their fathers, theirs as the gift from the Sovereign of all nature, the Master of all spirit, in the book

of Genesis, in that part which relates the history of Jacob, we meet with the following passage:

ויאמר יעקב אלהי אבי אברהם ואלהי אבי יצחק
ה׳ האמר אלי שוב לארצך ולמולדתך ואיטיבה עמך:
בר׳ לב׳ י׳:

"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and unto thy birthplace, and I will deal well with thee." Genesis xxxii. 10.

The remainder of the prayer you can read for yourselves in the chapter just quoted; for, as it is not my purpose to-day to look to the petition of the patriarch, but only to the manner in which he addressed the Deity, I merely cite so much as will be requisite for our present discussion.—You, brethren, no doubt have often been struck at the vast difference which exists among the religions to which the different sections of mankind profess themselves, and the pertinacity with which they cling to their favourite theories and the ingenuity with which they defend them. Every man is or professes to be convinced of the truth of what he says he believes in, and it is equally clear that the vast majority must be mistaken; since if we take any one's thoughts as a standard of comparison, we shall find that he is contradicted by the great mass of mankind, though his associates be numbered by the million. This simple view of the state of man with regard to religion must be a source of tranquillity to even an uneducated Israelite, when he is called upon to account for the smallness of the number of those who believe with him, in comparison with those

from whose opinions he dissents. In other words, numbers are no proof of the truth of ideas, and that it is as likely, without weighing the soundness of any opinion by the authority of strict analogy, that one set of ideas is wrong, as any other which is diametrically opposed to it. That is to say, we have at a first view of the case an equal right of insisting upon the soundness of our doctrines of religion, as any other class of mankind have with regard to those which they entertain, and this would hold good, were there but one Israelite left on earth, and were those dissenting all of one opinion. But how does the case stand? There are in truth many, and their number is millions, who agree with us in our received opinions, there are thousands upon thousands who boast of a descent from Israel; and though they be in a very small minority if compared to the entire body of men, they are not to be overlooked as too insignificant of notice; whilst those who differ from us do not alone differ among themselves, but do this in ideas the most opposite and contrary to each other.—But there is something much more tangible to uphold our doctrines than the diversity existing on every side around us; for we do not found our religion upon the discoveries of modern experimentalists, nor on the theories of ancient philosophers, but upon the revelation of divine things which we have received, and the positive historical events in which we have been concerned from the very origin of man upon the earth until this very day. Consequently, if through these two criteria we can defend our belief and actions, it can be of but little weight with us, whether we stand alone, or whether every other child

of Adam entertains the same views; for revelation does not receive confirmation from the ideas of mortals, nor can historical facts be gainsaid by simple contradiction and actual violence.

We set out with the bold declaration, that *our belief is strictly Scriptural*, and that no other views can be in accordance with the biblical standard, no matter how loudly they may be urged, no matter how much show of authority may be advanced for them. Let me state at once that were we to live only among Israelites, all such assertions as those just alluded to would have but little effect on us; but the case is very different as we are now situated, surrounded by and in familiar intercourse with those who not only dissent from us, but who make it their business, a sort of especial duty which they owe to their own system, to draw us away from the paths of our belief unto those of the many diverging religions which the world presents to us for acceptance. I think it also my duty to state at once as a cardinal point of our belief, that we do not entertain it because it contradicts other systems, but because it is true in itself; not because certain prophecies which are alleged to have been fulfilled support or do not support other views, but simply because it is in consonance with the whole tenor of revelation. In our intercourse with the world, you all know, we are constantly asked, why we remain Jews, seeing that our religion was abrogated by the substitution of a better one many centuries ago, and we are referred to many passages in the life of the founder thereof, which are said to tally wonderfully with the predictions of our own prophets. Now it cannot be expected that I could

examine in one lecture or even in a series of discourses the whole of these alleged fulfilments; since written instruction on such a theme is better than oral communication. But it surely cannot be out of place to review the system of argument advanced to us to change our belief for that of any other which can be offered to us. Let us understand well what *is* our religion, as a system of belief, disconnected from its duties which render it a practical guide of life. As a belief it is the original conception which man in his enlightened state received of his Creator; it is the avowal that we discover in Him the same qualities, the same characteristics, the same goodness, the same wisdom as from the beginning. It teaches, that, when nothing of what we for the sake of distinction call *matter* was in being, He, the Creator, existed as powerful, as good, as wise as He is now proved to be by the manner in which He governs the universe. This idea is emphatically connected with the assumption that the Creator, who pre-existed to the world, and who continues in existence since the time that all was made, is essentially ONE and INDIVISIBLE, not affected by the accidents which attach themselves to humanity, that He is not subject to age or decay, that He exists without an associate, and that to his will nothing is impracticable. When we say therefore that we believe in ADONAY ECHAD the ONE only Eternal Being, we mean to advance, that according to our acceptation of the word "God," it embraces the belief that there is no separation, no division in the Godhead, that there is no assemblage of parts or aggregation of individuals composing his being; but that of Him we cannot imagine any descent by the power of pa-

ternity, nor any transfer of power inherent to his divinity by transmission or delegation to any other. We moreover contend, that this was always the belief of our people, and that this was so, because God himself had taught us this idea concerning his existence, and that hence we are not at liberty, either as reasoning beings or as servants of this God, the Most High in all existence, to adopt any opinions which could in the least contradict this our original belief, or tend in any way to lessen our attachment for the same. We therefore do not insist on the correctness of our views, because they are ours by discovery which, long as it naturally now is since the days of Abraham, might have been superseded by the investigation of later and more deeply learned philosophers than the shepherd-patriarch was; but because they are ours by instruction, by the avowal of the Creator himself, which instruction, proceeding as it does from the Source of wisdom itself, cannot be improved upon by the discoveries of the most intelligent men living in times posterior to this revelation; since nothing which they can by any possibility discover of God, can in the least contradict that which He himself has taught us. You see, brethren, that we need not *seek* for light in any *work* whatever, other than the *Bible;* for that only can be a source of instruction; since should the former confirm the latter, it would teach us nothing new on this all-important subject; and if it should contradict it, one of two things would necessarily be the case, either that it does not teach the truth, or that the instruction of the Bible had been revoked by a later revelation of the Creator himself. Admitting for one moment that this could be, that

He who had taught us, "I am God, and there is none else," could have changed this very assertion by changing, or extending, or subdividing himself at a later period in the history of the world: still we might safely pause and ask, "When did this revelation take place? when did there come men like the prophets of Israel, full of the divine spirit, animated by the wisdom of God, speaking as the substitutes of Abraham, of Israel, of Moses, of David, of Isaiah, and of Jeremiah, to announce to the world, Thus saith the Lord, there is a son whom I have brought forth, hearken ye unto him?"

We contend, and history confirms our assertion, that no such revelation ever took place, that no such prophets ever taught such blasphemy in the streets of Jerusalem, and that the event itself, that is, a change in the Godhead, did not occur in the course of history, assuming even that this impossibility were possible. How then can we, who have received the custody of Heaven's legacy, swear fealty to a creed of which we have received no divine confirmation? how can we search for truth in a book, which affirms at once, and must affirm so to have any existence at all, that there is a plurality in the godhead? a change of purpose? an insufficiency in the Creator's power? a transmission of authority to one who was not in being from the beginning any more than any other matter or spirit which exists by the will of God? For if it be said, that a divine descent is possible, since the son might have existed in the father from the beginning, we could assert the same with regard to every thing else: all must have existed in God, since He has alone produced all. Still who would or could

for such a reason invest matter with independent power? or imagine that, because God created matter, He has therefore parted with a portion of his omnipotent prerogative? that, for instance, the creation of all the things we see around us has stopped his ability to add thereto as much and more yet, to an extent which no human mind can conceive? And yet it is gravely asserted, that a time was when all God's creation was doomed to everlasting perdition, until an emanation from himself became a voluntary sacrifice, and died as a partial descendant from Adam to assume the guilt of Adam, and thus restore all his posterity to grace by relieving them from the curse entailed on them through the original sin of the first parents of mankind. And why was this done? simply because, it is said, the offended justice of the Creator could not forgive without a sacrifice; and as no human being could be a worthy sacrifice to God, hence a divine being, partaking of human nature, was required to reconcile God to his offending creatures. I have stated to you the doctrine as well as I can understand it myself; at least I never heard it better explained.

If now we examine it by our views of the Godhead, two things will appear as irreconcilable with the new theory which we are asked to adopt instead of our own. First, that God could not forgive without a sacrifice. It is true that every sin, no matter how small, is an offence against the majesty of God. When therefore Adam sinned, a specific punishment was decreed, the death of the body of him and his descendants, until that day when, as a prophet speaking in connexion with, not against this revelation says,

"God will swallow up death forever, and wipe away the tear from every face;" but nowhere is there an intimation in plain words, and we may add by inference, where it is not so said, that the soul of all sons of Adam shall not see the presence of God except through sacrifice. The scheme of sacrifices ordered in Leviticus and Numbers is nowise stated to be a necessary prerequisite for salvation. Nowhere in the whole book of Genesis are sacrifices ordained as a duty imposed upon mankind; and, if they were indispensable for salvation, they would have been instituted among the commandments conveyed to the family of Noäh immediately after the flood, if not even to Adam himself after his eating the forbidden fruit. But this is not the case; it rather seems that all sacrificial acts recorded in Genesis were merely the spontaneous tokens of gratitude on the part of the persons who brought them, as a sanctification of a portion of their worldly property to the good and great Being from whom they had received many blessings. In process of time these voluntary offerings became connected with the purposes of false worship and idolatry; and therefore though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are reported to have erected altars for publicly teaching the name of the Lord, there are but few passages which seem to say that any sacrifices were brought there. The one is in Genesis xxxi. 54, which is rendered, "Then Jacob offered a sacrifice upon the mount," though even here others interpret it as if Jacob had merely killed one or more animals to prepare a feast for Laban and his other relatives, before taking a final farewell of each other. Another is in Genesis xlvi. 1, when Jacob

offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac at his going down to Egypt. I will candidly admit that the absence of any mention of burnt-offerings, except the ram which Abraham brought instead of his son, is no proof that they were not usual; for in truth, Isaac in his conversation with his father seemed to know perfectly well the nature of such an offering; but certain it is that no command was ever given to the patriarchs to make sacrifices as an atonement for guilt, or as a token of gratitude. When however the people of Israel were instituted as a nation, the law given to them recognized sacrifices as a part of the temple-worship, and the Passover-lamb as a domestic offering in order to thank the Lord. There can be no doubt, that as God never changes, this scheme was in his mind from the beginning as one of the means of constituting Israel a separate people; it was to be one of the many tokens of obedience whether they would obey the Lord with all their hearts and with all their souls; but an absolute prerequisite to salvation the sacrifices surely were not. Moses threatened that God would destroy our sanctuary, not accept the agreeable savour of our offerings, and scatter us among the nations; yet at the same time he asserts that we shall not be utterly cast off, notwithstanding our sins and dispersion; but that the Lord would remember unto us the ancient covenant which He had made with our fathers. Consequently the absence of sacrificial atonement could and would not be a bar to our being received in mercy, even as we are this day without temple, without priest, without burnt-offering; and we trust that the mercy which punished us for our sins, banished us from our land, overthrew

our altar, and would not receive incense polluted by sin, whilst it spared the remnant of Abraham's sons as witnesses of divine truths for future generations, will be yet longer extended to us to forgive us when we call in penitence, and to guard us, that the lamp of Jacob be not quenched by the floods of tribulation which often threaten to extinguish it forever.—If then sacrifices were never absolutely requisite for salvation, if they were merely a part of our duties, like the giving of tithes and the periodical pilgrimages to the temple: it cannot be said, that they were or could be intended to serve as a type of a greater sacrifice than themselves which they were to foreshadow, a sacrifice which was to consummate all in one great offering to the Deity. For such an atonement can only be possible in accordance with a revelation, that no salvation is possible without a sacrifice; but as this is not mentioned in any portion of the Scripture as far as our knowledge extends: we must insist upon our position, that an atonement to take away the sins of mankind by a sacrifice of one portion of the deity to the other, is unscriptural, and consequently not to be believed in by those who wish to adhere strictly to the law and the testimony which have been delivered unto us.

The second inconsistency is the impossibility of the atonement, admitting even that it were requisite, which we have just denied. What would be the state of the Deity, could such a sacrifice take place? Simply this, there must be a separation of wills in the personages composing it, the one willing to die, and the other willing to accept the atonement; at the same time that the death of the one must be perfectly

voluntary, and submitted to without the concurrence or compulsion of the other; for if it were otherwise, say that the one compelled or persuaded, or bargained with the other to sacrifice himself, the death incurred could not be meritorious in the suffering party, and thus could not effect what it was intended for. But this voluntary self-sacrifice of the one, and this acceptance by the other, would argue at once that these had not one purpose; that there could be a separation of sentiment between them; that one could suffer something unpleasant to him which the other cheerfully accepted; and what is more yet, that a settled purpose of the godhead was counteracted and overthrown by the act of a portion of himself over which he could have no control; or else the sacrifice is nothing, for it would be merely that he sacrificed himself to himself in order to destroy his will, which in this case he might have accomplished without this useless intervention of the part of himself which became afflicted. In other words, the sacrifice referred to can only be thought of, if there is a division of purpose between the two parties; whilst at the same time it would prove a difference in their state of existence, the one as unchangingly the same from the beginning, the other as affected with humanity, subject to disease, sorrow, and death, and consequently not god; whereas, according to our religion, nay the simple words of the Bible, there is but ONE person, ONE purpose, ONE will, ONE power in the Godhead; consequently there can be no difference of purpose, no possibility of accomplishing to-day what was impossible before. We say accordingly, either God was always able to save, whether a sacrifice was brought or not, or He could

not do it under any circumstances whatever. To assert the latter would be to deny to God the great prerogative of perfection and unlimited will; should He create merely for sorrow? should He give a soul merely that she should be lost to everlasting? should He desire only to see the misery of the perfection of his works? Is this the goodness, the mercy, the justice which the Scriptures proclaim as the ways of the Lord? Surely not; this would be injustice, cruelty; and we had better indeed never been formed, than sent hither for such a deplorable end. Consequently we must assume the opposite opinion, that there is power in the Creator to bless with salvation all his creatures; that He can, if his wisdom and justice deem it fitting, forgive iniquity and blot out our guilt, as He causes the clouds to vanish before the driving wind. For "Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, is the Holy One of Israel;" unto Him should we look in our youth, in our manhood, in our years of decay, to let his spirit accept the humble work which we bring as our offering into his sanctuary, to forgive mercifully where justice demands chastisement, and to bless with favour where the memorial of the good deeds done by erring men ascends for acceptance into his presence. There can accordingly be no thought of vacillation or change of purpose in the conception we have of our relation to God. For in the whole extent of Scripture we are taught the same doctrine, that mankind can sin, that by this means guilt is incurred, that punishment can be deserved, that the Lord permits justice to be exercised against the rebellious sinner who perseveres in his iniquity and refuses the abundance of grace that is held out

to all men. But it also impressively informs us, that the gates of mercy are never closed, that they are always ready to be opened to every one who claims admittance by repentance or obedience; that the Lord is merciful and will pardon abundantly; and that no soul is lost, if in its contrition it will return to our God, who has promised "Return ye unto me, and I will return unto you, and why will you die, O house of Israel!" This scheme of salvation is perfectly consistent with mercy and with justice: there is justice to restrain sinners, and mercy to those who have fulfilled their duty, who have walked humbly before God, or who have sought his pardon after they have discovered that their way was evil, and leading them far away from those pleasant paths which virtue alone opens to us, which spring alone from an entire obedience to the will of God our Maker.

As usual with my lectures, I have been detaining you a long time, while barely touching upon the subject which I meant to elucidate; but I also hope to be permitted hereafter to address you again on a theme which is of so much importance to every one of us. But to-day I must hasten to a conclusion, although the matter has not yet been exhibited in a connected manner. I said, that history is a proof of the justness of our religious hope, and allow me to exhibit this briefly in reference to the text which I chose for to-day's discussion. "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who saidst to me, Return unto thy country and unto thy birthplace, and I will do well with thee." If we can prove that our early fathers prayed as we do, that they knew of no saviour whom we do

not worship: then have we every reason, without any other proof and without farther discussion, to reject any system which asks of us to pray through any mediator, or in any manner which they did not employ. But how do we pray? "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob," or in the very manner which Jacob employed in his petition when he felt the fear of Esau's violence which had been threatened against him. He addressed the God ONE, the unchanging, whose promises always meet their fulfilment, whose seal is truth, and who never forsakes those who put their trust in Him. There was no mediator mentioned, no power invoked to stand between the sinful creature and the august Creator who is able to deliver. It was not therefore out of fear of the non-fulfilment of God's promises that Jacob spoke, but out of a full assurance that all his words are true and steadfast. Even so do we at this day come into his presence. Jacob slew not a hecatomb of animals, he came not to pray through the merit of a sacrifice voluntarily made for him by another, but as a simple petitioner, relying upon the mercy of Him who had been with him on all the way which he had gone. We too come without the blood of sacrifices, because our temple is desolate; but we also rely upon the promises of the undeceiving, unalterable, unchanging God, that He will keep his covenant which He swore to our fathers, so that come what may his mercy and his outstretched arm will never be wanting to guard his children in their long and weary pilgrimage. We come as the sons of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, we come as the followers of Him whom our fathers

adored, and unto Him do we speak, as children speak to their earthly parent; we recount not his greatness, for words fail of reaching his being; but we acknowledge his power, refer to the truth which He hath sworn unto us, and ask Him for all that we need, for understanding, for protection, for blessed harvests, for aid to repentance, for pardon, for healing, for freedom, for the permanence of the law, for the restoration of our state, for the light of his countenance, and lastly for peace, that blessing without which all other gifts are imperfect, that gift which is the crowning glory of the saints in a purer state of existence; and we ask of Him that He will in goodness make clear before us the thorny path of life and incline our hearts to follow steadily the guidance of the law, to strengthen us in our resolves to fulfil his commandments. All this was the custom of our fathers, all this the Bible teaches us by example and precept. We maintain therefore that in so doing we are truly fulfilling our duty as true children of the covenant, and faithful to the law we have received; and we trust that thus we shall be acceptable to God on high, though men may condemn, though tyrants endeavour to destroy the unity of Israel, by depriving them of the law of the One God. And may He, who blessed our fathers, also bless us with his peace and the light of his countenance from now and forever. Amen.

Kislev 12th. } 5606
Decm. 13th. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE FUTURE.

O FATHER! who art nigh to the distressed when all other aid is far away, who hearest the cry of agony when all other ears are closed, assist this day thy people Israel, though enemies to thy glory endeavour to destroy them, and let thy protection be vouchsafed unto them as it was from the beginning. Let us be taught that thy power is yet the same as of old, crushing the destroyer, and blessing him that blesses thy heritage, the same now as ever to cast down from his proud height the arrogant, and to lift up from the dust those who are bowed down by sorrow and tribulation. Let thereby the greatness of thy Name be proved, and cause it to be sanctified by those who at this day are yet estranged from Thee, so that they too may hasten to thy house and offer up prayer without deceit, an outpouring of the contrite spirit, the sweetest savour on thy altar. Let it thus be thy will that thy Memorial be hallowed by all flesh, and that all that has spirit glorify Thee for evermore. Amen.

BRETHREN!

It is, as you well know, often made a matter of reproach to us, that we claim to be a peculiar people, one chosen by God, especially beloved by the Creator; and there are accordingly timid Jews, who repudiate this distinctive grace, and join the gentile cry that

there is nothing really admirable in Israel, and that one nation is as much the people of God as any other. In one sense of the word it is readily admitted that, as far, namely, as providential care is concerned, we are no more in the sight of God than any other people; He knows of no distinction between those whom He has formed, his earth is fruitful to all mankind, his rain refreshes for them the soil, and his sunlight ripens for them the products of the field. Still there may reasonably be a peculiar mission assigned to us, for the benefit of all, which, as it is a particular work to be accomplished by us, must distinguish us in some manner from those to whom we are sent. It is therefore no arrogance in us to say that we are chosen instruments in the hands of God to effect his purpose, any more than it is boastful praise to say of the earth that she is the instrument of giving sustenance to the thousands of ten thousands living creatures that live upon her surface. And as the earth is bound by certain rules, called laws of nature, in her functions as sustainer of life: so are we, the bearers of the divine message, both from reason and revelation, bound to adhere to certain distinctive ordinances, which are actually the laws of our nature as a people, without which we would at once cease to be, and without which our mission could not be made available to the other portions of mankind. We have but one source of boasting in all this: not that we are better, wiser, or happier than others, but that it pleased the Lord of all spirits to choose us in preference to all others, that He placed his word in our mouth and said most solemnly that thence it should never depart. There must therefore be a great obliquity of vision

in those who have no kindly feelings for Israel, when making it a matter of reproach that we claim to be what we are; and little sound sense or honesty is displayed by the Israelite who, to escape being thought in contradiction to the world, quietly assents to the unfounded assertion, that we have no superiority over other men. There are unfortunately certain persons, whose courage does not consist in being able to sustain an unpopular cause; with them the opinion of the many is an infallible test of truth; and no sooner does it appear that a certain view of a question draws towards it the admiration of the masses, than they are at once seized with a conviction that there is something very tangible in the new theory, something very detestable in the opinions derived from ancient days. Persons of this stamp do not add a very great weight to any views by their support, nor weaken their strength by opposing them. Not a century back, when there was drawn a strong and distinct line between the Jews and gentiles, when a familiar intercourse was permitted only under certain favourite circumstances, such as these would have clung to the thought of the election of Israel as their darling view; since it added to their own importance in their self-estimation. But as now the society of gentiles is easily attained, as the lines have become more narrowed and less strongly marked, there is a larger mass to be propitiated than the Jews can exhibit; hence it is criminal in these to assume any superiority, even in a mere moral point of view, though it is actually true in fact, and has made itself felt in the whole course of history. And as now some zealots among gentiles, those who are zealots for some

one of the many religions professed beyond us, and zealots for the liberation of mind from all positive restraints imposed on it by belief, aver that it is arrogance in us to claim a divine election, or that it is absurd to imagine the existence of such an election: our lukewarm Israelites assent to this in their inconsiderate folly, and narrow down their Jewish feelings to such an imperceptible minuteness, that almost all effects likely to arise therefrom are banished from their character. It is easily enough seen, that such Jews are not deserving of the name they bear; they are recreants, cowards, men unfaithful to their charge, and they throw an undeserved odium upon the principles which they apparently profess, by imitating and siding with our opponents in their conversation and acts, and they not rarely weaken the attachment which others might feel for our faith, were their inexperience not acted upon by these faint-hearted sluggards.

You know, brethren, as must know also every one who reads the Scriptures with attention, that the prophets have predicted various events as impending, sooner or later, which are to have a material bearing upon the character and happiness of our people. I allude to the advent of the Messiah, as the august personage whom we expect is called, or, in other words, "the anointed messenger of the Lord." Connected with this advent are promised the reinstitution of the Jewish nation in their former abode, the land of Palestine, and the re-establishment of the polity of Scriptures both in a civil and religious sense. This prominent feature of our hope of a revived nationality has, as one might easily imagine, been ever the cause

of much ill-will from the enemies of the Hebrew race. "See," they say, "here are individuals, who live in our lands, who are protected by our laws, who grow rich upon our labour, who yet dissent from our religion, claim for themselves a future which must render them hostile to the government, and will prevent them from amalgamating with us into one people. Go to France, you will find the Jews looking to Palestine as their proper home; go to England, and the same will be discovered; in Italy they pray for a restoration; and in Turkey, in India, and, in brief, wherever they are, they entertain the same expectations. It is no use to show them kindness, they remain obdurate; their laws differ from those of every nation, and they yield only a grudging support to the laws of the land." Such arguments were used by Pharaoh for oppressing the Hebrews; such a reasoning Haman employed to obtain from the king of Persia the privilege of destroying the hated people from among mankind; and the same pretext is employed by the Pharaohs and Hamans of our day to give a colouring of reason to their schemes of wickedness against the chosen of the Lord. And to our sorrow and shame be it spoken, there are men who aim to be leaders in our midst, who echo the idle clamour of our opponents, and say, "There is no Messiah for Israel." These hold it as antiquated and unphilosophical to look for any change in our national existence; they aver that the reign of the Messiah is to be a pure idealism, a universal conformity to a pure religion of some sort: whilst to the Jews themselves France, and England, and Germany, and Siberia, and all the lands of their sorrow are to be their permanent homes;

they are to be free only through the grants of the various governments; but never must they look forward to see a prince and ruler in Judah, and a judge sitting in the chair of judgment under the protection of the descendant of David.

Let us endeavour to examine the subject to discover whether the faith of the Jews is any bar to their being worthy members of any state, whether monarchical or republican, and whether their expectations and present views of the nature of the religions professed by others can be any injury to those differing from them.—When God first called our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to himself, He promised them that He would be a God to them and their descendants after them. These patriarchs at the same time knew that their immediate children would be strangers in a land not theirs, and that the nation among which they should live would oppress them and hold them to labour a long time; but that at the end of a period of wandering, of four hundred years, the believers in the God of Abraham should be suffered to go free with great possessions, to be then instituted as the people of God, to occupy the land of their fathers' sojourning, the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession. Of this prophecy the whole of Jacob's household were cognizant, Joseph no less than Judah and Benjamin, or Reuben and Asher; it was not a dark foreboding, a family tradition of which they entertained any doubt, but a certainty, though the child of the future, the accomplishment of which they confidently looked for. The only uncertainty with them may have been *the land* in which they should be compelled to labour; of this the prophecy had said noth-

ing; consequently it might have been Egypt or not; perhaps they suspected that it was the land over which Joseph ruled, without their being precisely able to foresee, how they who were freemen, and an intelligent and growing race, could be reduced to abject slavery by those who had been benefitted by the wisdom and inspiration of one of their own number. Still now examine the history of Joseph. Was he less faithful to his trust than if he had governed a Hebrew commonwealth? was Egypt less happy than if he had not hoped that his descendants would quit it for a brighter land, for a happier home, where the religion of Abraham would flourish luxuriantly? was he less honourable as an Egyptian, because as an Israelite he ordered his bones should be buried in the land of Canaan? Let those answer who profess a distrust of the Jews; let those Jews answer who are ashamed of their hopes. Not alone did Joseph and his brothers eschew the idolatry of Egypt, they also considered themselves sojourners only in the land; and still they were men without guile to their countrymen; they were trusty officers, peaceful neighbours. But even the man who held familiar intercourse with the Godhead, the man who was comforted by heavenly visions wherever he went; at Bethel, when he fled from before Esau; at Haran, when he fed Laban's sheep; at Beër-Shebang, at his going down to Egypt, Jacob himself was true to foreign governments; his son, our section of this week tells us, brought him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh; Jacob the father of the faithful, the happy father, among whose twelve sons there was not one who was faithless to the Eternal God, who had neither

an Ishmael nor an Esau among all his numerous household,—he blessed an idolatrous king, doubtless as he blessed Joseph, and Ephraim, and Menasseh, in the name of the ever blessed Creator, the Deity whom the Egyptians knew not, the God whom they profaned by the senseless mixture of image-worship which constituted their belief. If no other proof than this were at hand, it would be enough to establish that a confident expectation of a change of the place of their sojourning did in nowise weaken the obedience, which our early fathers felt for the governments under which they lived, and that by a parity of reasoning no other result can arise at our day from a continuation among us of a similar belief. Now go down into the events of history, and look at Daniel who lived during the comparatively short captivity of Babylon; and what will you see there? the same result precisely as with Joseph. Daniel earnestly prayed for the restoration which he knew could not be long delayed: and yet who was more faithful than he? who more honoured at the court of Nebuchadnezzar and the Persian conqueror? If then those, who knew the day almost when their captivity would terminate, were not less faithful on that account to their temporal rulers: how much more may we claim the benefit of such a feeling, when we acknowledge that our hope is for an indefinite time? for a period which may be deferred for ages to come? To all intents and purposes we are members, according to our religious opinions, of the countries where we live: whilst at the same time we hold to the prophetic prediction that a time is impending, when there shall be brought about a union of the scattered remnants, who are to

form one state, ruled over, not by an ideal universality of truth, but by a person whom the Lord will select as his instrument of mercy, equally as was Moses when he led forth a nation of abject slaves, in whose bosom hope had almost expired, to become a people fit for self-government, through a long training and constant instruction during a pilgrimage of forty years in a trackless, barren, and thirsty desert. No one except a prejudiced being can discover in such a belief any enmity to our native land or our adopted home. The Israelite who is a believer in the restoration may feel the strongest ties to his country, in which he lives, and in which, for all he knows, his descendants to the tenth generation may yet continue to abide. He has therefore the same incentive to uphold its laws, to shed his blood for the maintaining of its honour and the integrity of its territory, as any other of his countrymen. To this some may object, that Jews have been known to express indifference for their country, and contempt for its inhabitants. Without disputing this assertion, we may claim as a fact that Jews have seldom been found intriguing against the government, even where they met with oppression instead of protection; and that the disinclination to obedience to local laws may have arisen, and doubtless did arise, from the tyranny exercised towards them. Who can be obedient with a cheerful heart to laws which consider him an outcast from the society of men? who can respect his neighbour that constantly maltreats him, and heaps upon him abuse and contumely? Withal, Israelites have always been kind to those in distress; to their ear the cry for pity has never come in vain; and where they meet with scorn

and oppression, even there have their hands been open to relieve those who needed their aid. And what was, let us now ask, the state of their hearts, all the while? What upheld them when they were spurned by the high and the vulgar, when the very beggar whom they fed and clothed blessed himself that he was not a Jew? They found a strong support, and a source of never-failing comfort, in every age, in every country, in the same conviction which filled Jacob's breast in his dying moments, in the assurance that there would one day be an end to the hardships of Israel, that a bright and glorious future would dawn upon the world in the time of God, when those who hope for redemption will not be deceived in their expectation, when those who have left the earth in this hope will rejoice in heaven over the good which their remote descendants have attained, in being heirs to unfading glory through the possession of that belief which their forefathers preserved for them amidst the waves of affliction which swept over our race, and carried it away as their sole treasure when the fire devoured their substance, and the sword slew unpityingly the doomed members of the house of Jacob. Yes, it was the conviction that only a certain amount of suffering would have to be endured; that the enemies of Israel would not finally prevail; that all their raging would exhaust itself, like the fury of the hurricane upon the rocky promontory that offers its naked sides to the assaults of the sea, which upheld our people through ages, when to hate them was considered a virtue, amidst sorrows which would have crushed other nations more numerous and powerful than we ever were. I will not enumerate those

communities which have disappeared from the page of history, for that has been done before, but merely insist upon the undeniable fact, that only an internal conviction of better things could possibly have supported us and carried us triumphantly through the midst of all our many trials and sore afflictions.

It passes my judgment to discover what incentive equally strong to uphold our law could have been devised, by those of us who wish to inculcate that it would be our greatest happiness to become incorporated with the Frenchmen, or the Germans, or the Russians, or the Hindoos, or the Chinese, as one and the same people. Politically speaking, we are this already; we belong to the state where we live just as Joseph and Jacob did to Egypt. But religiously, even our moderns are different from others in the same state with them; because they are believers in One God whilst the people around them believe in a plurality; they uphold the obligation of the Mosaic code whilst no other nation on earth conforms to the same religion, even where the belief in the unity of God prevails. So let them act as they will, let them go where they will, they are in a contradiction to the rest of mankind; and surely the belief in the Messiah is not so anti-social that it must be rejected without acquiring in its stead a feeling equally powerful for good, equally conservative of our happy-making religion, as our ancient hopes. It may serve in times of peace, and when persecution has sheathed her sword, to be satisfied with mere abstractions; but even here we can meet our destroyers, by asking them, whether or not irreligion and a restless love of change, a silent assimilation to the gentiles have

not made fearful progress among those who agree with them in opinion. Still, let us leave this out of view, we would ask, Where are our afflicted brothers to obtain the inward strength to withstand the assaults of the world, when you have taken away their strong hope in the truth of God, at a time which may come again, at a time, which God's mercy may avert, when the name of Jew will again become the password for death and oppression? "The world is too enlightened!" Perhaps so, at this day; but even this is not the case; for constantly are we pained at the recital of tales of horror, in reference to those Israelites who have to suffer for their faith. But even were it otherwise, there is no warrant in the history of the world to assert, that what once has been cannot occur again. It is unfortunately but too true, that historical scenes are constantly acted over again, and the wisdom of experience fails to enlighten those who are acting on the stage of human events. Change the heart of man, or else do not speak to us of the impossibility of persecution; those who are the many love to impose their thoughts and their mode of acting upon all around them; and we have yet to learn that the arm of violence may not be applied where simple persuasion fails of success. No, leave us our religion with all its hopes, with all its peculiar aspirations, as we have received it, and do not imagine that a prayer for our restoration renders us less obedient to the laws of the land, or less tolerant and charitable to those who differ from us. Our religion is merely to strengthen us in our struggle with outward circumstances, both in times of ease and in ages of sorrow; and he is no true Israelite who would seek

from the nature of his belief any warrant for departing from the line of duty, which a universal love of mankind and the demands of good citizenship impose on him as his rule of action.

We come now to the objection that the belief in a restoration is unphilosophical, unreasonable. Here indeed is the whole strength of the case. Our moderns are tinctured with a want of faith; they cannot reduce their religion to any mathematical certainty, they cannot prove by any previous historical data, how the son of David is to arise, how the hearts of the people are to be turned with one accord to look to the land of Israel as their home; how the jarring elements among us are to be reconciled so as to enable us to form a homogeneous state, one in sentiment and one in interest; how the highly cultivated European, and the half-civilized Chinese, and the savage mountaineer of Africa are all to unite in one confederacy, speaking as they do different languages, and conforming as they are to different customs, with the single element of union the result of their religion. I confess, that I see no human possibility to effect all this; but what man cannot do, is effected at once by the mere will of God. So was the exodus from Egypt unphilosophical; so was the descent on Sinai a physical impossibility; but however far skepticism may proceed, it cannot deny the existence of the Jewish people, nor that of the law of Moses. Both, though therefore not producible by any known human agency, were nevertheless established in the course of events; and hence when we are speaking in the spirit of faith, though perhaps not in that of philosophy, we are warranted in asserting that the

advent of the Messiah is determined on by the Lord, and He will at the proper time bring to pass certain events which will establish his truth, and that then all these events will occur just as they have been predicted. Our wishes will have nothing to do with the course of futurity; whether we desire to remain an inconsiderable sect in every country, living unmolested by the will and sufferance of the prince or the majority, or whether we would hasten to become members of the new state to be established by the power of God, cannot influence the counsels of the Most High. On the contrary, all will be fulfilled despite of the unwillingness of the Israelites themselves, or the wrath or ridicule of those who are not the friends of our religion. And in truth, the redemption from Egypt was no less unlikely than the reign of the Messiah; and as sure as by the means of the first a nation of believers was erected who have ever since borne the obloquy of the world, so will the predicted good come to pass, and the sons of Israel will be made the joy of all generations; and the Lord will not rest from blessing us with his spirit of grace till the day when, as Ezekiel predicts:

ועבדי דוד מלך עליהם ורועה אחד יהיה לכלם
ובמשפטי ילכו וחקותי ישמרו ועשו אותם :

יחזקאל לו׳ כד׳ :

"And my servant David shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be for them all; and in my ordinances shall they walk, and my statutes shall they observe and do them. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given unto my servant Jacob, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children forever; and

David, my servant, shall be prince unto them forever." Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 25.

So spoke the God of truth, whose words never have deceived us; and shall we doubt? No, let us look forward to a time more glorious than this, when all Israel shall have one God and one shepherd, when all the world will be blessed with peace; and when all mankind like ourselves shall worship the same Eternal Father, and all shall offer their incense as Jacob did of old "to the God of our father Isaac," the ONE who was and is and will be. Amen.

Tebeth 4th. } 5606.
Jan'y 2d. }

DISCOURSE XV.

REFLECTIONS AND HOPES.

O ETERNAL GOD! Thou who art attentive to all the deeds of man, we beseech Thee to come and dwell in our hearts, and to fill our spirits with thy wisdom. We know that it is through thy teaching alone that we are made intelligent, that without thy instruction we should grope in pain on the dark path of life, as the blind man staggers without a guide in the streets of a city. But when thy religion is a light to man's feet, when his soul feels the importance of thy revelations, how firmly does he then move forward on life's fitful journey; for he then sees Thee standing to re-

ceive him at the end of his path, and he hastens forward to where Thou appearest, as the tottering child confides in his unsteady feet hastening into his father's arms who stands ready to snatch him up unto his bosom. O Father! enlighten us so that religion may be this guide unto us, a firm support during our earthly pilgrimage, and a sure means of reuniting our souls to thy holy Essence, where we shall abide forever, upheld and preserved as faithful children who have followed their father's commands. Be Thou, then, our firm Support when temptations assail us, and a Consolation to our spirit in the gloomy hour of despair, when sorrow disturbs the fair image which our imagination has set up as its hope of existence, when joy seems forever fled. Be an indulgent Judge to each individual of thy servants, and to the entire remnant of thy adorers. O God of truth! be a shield and buckler that the enemy may not prevail in the wicked design of depriving them of that stay which thy law has ever been to them. Glorify all the places of assembly of thy children with thy manifest presence, and let truth and divine knowledge spread thence to all who thirst for thy salvation. And this house, too, which has been built unto thy service, fill with thy glory, and lift up thy countenance to those who resort hither, and bless them with thy grace and the peace of mind and bodily tranquillity with which Thou blessest thy servants. Amen.

Brethren!

On this Sabbath it is twenty-one years since this new structure in which we are assembled was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Israel's God, after

the former building which stood here had been taken down, because the progress of events had demanded a more commodious house of assembly for the faithful in this city. It was not my good lot to be present on that hallowed occasion; but another, whose ministration was highly acceptable in the sanctuary, and a brother minister of another congregation, stood on that day before you, you who are still left of that joyous throng that crowded every avenue, and they opened with prayer and the voice of song the portals of this house, that the righteous might enter therein to thank the Lord. In the ears of many of you the sounds of psalm and prayer uttered on that memorable day doubtless still resound; but many are this day deaf to the voice of joy or the wailing of sorrow, for they sleep in the house appointed for all the living the slumber of death which knows of awakening only in the Lord's own day of the resurrection; and the ministers also who were then with you, they too have departed hence to receive the reward of their faithful striving in the good cause of Israel. New men have been called to fill their places, and the service of the Most High is continued by others, summoned from amongst the people to utter prayers for them in the language of our forefathers to the merciful Judge who sits enthroned unto eternity. And many who were on that day but infants in the nurses' arms, many on that day yet unborn, to whom the light of day had not then dawned, are now here, a new generation of faithful sons and daughters of Jacob to answer for themselves, whether or not there shall be maintained through them a line of witnesses of the glory and mercy of God. Ay, many who were part of the con-

gregation on this day twenty-one years ago, now are numbered with the dead; others have from a vigorous manhood passed on to old age, and now stand tottering on the brink of the grave; but the youth and maidens of that day are now advanced to the strength of maturity, and new representatives of Israel have sprung up around their parents and friends, more numerous than the preceding generation; and they are ready, ay, willing to bear aloft the banner under which our fathers marched to an imperishable renown which finds its record in heaven, and they are here to testify, as Hebrews always have testified, that their faith is entire in the One who is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, who is the first and who is the last, and without whom there exists no saviour or redeemer. Yes, of the joyous assembly who witnessed the consecration of this house many are no longer among the living; it is a mournful reflection that so many who were then instinct with all the energies of existence have faded away from before our sight, that

> "Hearts which then beat high with hope
> Now feel this throb no more."

It is deeply affecting to the soul to think that those deservedly beloved for their virtues and good deeds, and those honoured for their high endowments, had to succumb to the common destroyer of human life, without our solicitude and prayers having been able to prolong their days on earth. But it is also refreshing to reflect, that despite the withdrawal of so many from the scenes of busy life, the mercy of God has not been denied to those who have risen up after them;

but that in their stead a new race of believers are now in their place, to continue in their turn that line of adorers of the God of the universe, which first rose up into being in the person of that great name of antiquity, the Patriarch Abraham, the adorer of the Eternal, the beloved of his Maker. And we who are here this day, we too are hastening on to the place in which our fathers are at rest; we too are not in this world forever; but like all other sons of men we are but pilgrims on the earth, sojourners merely in God's world, tenants in his great domain, permitted to enjoy his gifts for a brief period only: when we, too, will speed on to our accounts, to render a faithful statement of our stewardship unto the Lord of our labours, who will then adjudge unto us the meed of reward or punishment which our deeds may have merited. And O! that when the hour of our own departure arrives, we too may be able to feel as our pious fathers felt in their last moments! O that we then may be conscious of a life of faith and good deeds; that we may be able to turn our eye calmly from the walks of life and meet undaunted the stroke of death, a death not then the gloomy harbinger of the termination of existence, but the beneficent angel sent to our suffering spirit to free it from its earthly prison, sent hither to conduct the immortal soul back to the God who gave it, to be reunited to Him in the indissoluble bonds of an unending happiness and an unfading joy in his presence, where no griefs disturb the passing hour, where no tears bedew the cheeks, where no anguish or bereavement wrings the hearts of parents for the children's loss, and where these are not called on to weep for the mother who is early

taken, or the tender father who is borne away on an untimely bier.

For the pursuing of a course which should terminate thus, to prompt a virtuous, God-pleasing life, and to enable us to die a calm, peaceful death, was the religion of Heaven given unto us; and in the spirit of this faith, this house was erected by you, and in the same mind are we met to-day, and always congregate to invoke the most holy Name who dwells among the assemblies of his people Israel. Well may we boast of our election; well may we glorify ourselves that "the Lord is our God," and that though "every people walketh each in the name of its God, we alone walk in the name of the living God and the eternal King;" and whilst the heavens endure over the earth, as long as the seasons change and the sun of heaven illumines the globe, so long will we respond to the words of prophecy, and be the men of the covenant, the children of faithfulness. Let not the superficial imagine, that our system is one of mere blind ceremony, of cold unmeaning acts where the spirit remains untouched. No, the religion of God pervades the whole man, it reaches to his thoughts, it enkindles his spirit no less, than it directs the deeds he should perform and the way in which he should walk: just as the power of the Lord is inherent in all creation, and governs and sustains the laws which regulate the invisible agents no less, than the outward products which thence result. Religion in the same manner is the principle which impels the spirit to feel, and this prompting is then rendered evident by the acts of the outward body. And where it has truly taken up its abode, life is a constant succession of holy teachings; it is a

continual sacrifice of selfishness on the altar of public good, and an entire surrendering to the will of the Creator. And the words of truth flow from the lips, as the sparkling waters from the rock-born fountain, in a perennial stream, to invigorate the inquiring ones with knowledge of the Lord, and to give them strength to press onward on their toilsome pilgrimage. And the charity of deeds drops into the lap of the hungry, like the fruit of the palm of the desert into that of the wayworn traveller. And they, the righteous agents themselves, stand like the brave stout oak in the midst of the forest, the mightiest among the trees of the field, or like the cedars on Lebanon, in undying greenness, and fresh and bright in extreme old age, unchanged and erect at the moment when chill, cold death stretches out his arm to bear them hence from the scenes of their labours.—"And is this indeed Judaism? is it indeed the religion of the spirit? has it not borrowed this lustre from other systems?" These are the words of those who wish to make it appear that their faith is purer, better than ours, that they have hopes which are strange to us; and that it was our intercourse with them which has stamped a new life on the mind of our people. But we insist upon the reverse of the proposition; we maintain that Judaism is in truth the religion of the spirit as we have represented it, and that it has borrowed no light from systems of ancient or modern days. As regards its reliance upon the power of God, to represent Him, as He is, all in all, there is no page in Scripture but exhibits this truth in a light not to be mistaken. Every event that is past is ascribed solely to his

agency, and every hope of that which is impending is referred to Him alone. He is represented to us as supervising the affairs of man; it is He who exalteth the lowly, it is He who casteth down the proud. When the righteous cry, we are told, that He listens, and the tears of the widow and fatherless are treasured up in his presence. When the thunders roll in the sky, we are impressed that it is his voice which speaks, and the lurid glare of lightning is the fire of his kindling. Is the rain poured out over the earth, it is his clouds which are discharged of their blessed burden; and does the snow drop down silently in flakes of pure whiteness, does the hoar frost descend during the night like sparkling ashes upon the herbs of the field or on the expanded housetops: it is his word which is fulfilled, his mission that is accomplished. And if the storm goes forth in resistless power, if fleets are dashed in pieces on a rocky shore, and the thousands of the crews swallowed up in the deep: it is his wrath which unchained the gale, it is his arm that crushed the power of the adversary. And if on the prayer of his servants the storm is stilled, if the angry waves of the ocean are assuaged, if the roaring billows cease in their tumult: it is the spirit of God that has allayed the storm, it is his breath that has made level the heaving bosom of the deep, and it is his blessing which guides the storm-tossed vessel into the haven of security. Wherever we turn our view, say the Scriptures, be it to the lofty blue vault that is stretched out like a "tent for dwelling" over our heads, or beyond it to the stars that speak in distant orbits of the power of their Maker, or the utmost verge of the imagination whither our

mortal vision cannot reach, or if we turn our gaze downward and let pass in review before us the minute objects which abound on earth, or the things which dwell in the water, or the substances which are drawn from the bowels of the globe:—in all we are told that the power of God is displayed; they are all his creatures, they are all the work of his hands, they are all within his ken; not one of them, not one of the mighty worlds which we behold from afar, not one of the tiniest insects which we cannot see except through the power of the instrument of science, is unseen by his all-pervading eye, not one is beyond or beneath his sustaining power. Shall we quote Scripture-passage to verify our assertion? It is needless, utterly so, for those who are familiar with the word of God, or those even who have even but superficially read the Psalms contained in our form of prayers. Every verse of them is based upon the immeasurable elevation of God, every one of them represents Him as the Lord who alone is Sovereign over all, to use the words of the inspired musician, "Give thanks to the Lord because He is good, for unto everlasting endureth his kindness; give thanks to the God of gods,—give thanks to the Lord of lords, for unto everlasting endureth his kindness." And well have Israelites been taught to know these truths; they have been through them endowed with the spirit of endurance amidst all the hardships and tribulations which have fallen to their lot; and in each and in all they were informed by the prophets and inspired men who had been sent to instruct them, that the Lord was with them in their affliction; that He who regardeth the widow's tears, and the orphan's

prayer was attentive to their sorrows, mindful of the yoke which was imposed on their shoulders, and that they should be preserved, even when human means should be combined, and nations should devise counsel to blot out their name from the face of the earth. More than thirty-five centuries have elapsed since these promises were spoken, since the Lord said to Moses, as in our portion of to-day:

ולמען תספר באזני בנך ובן בנך את אשר התעללתי במצרים ואת אתתי אשר שמתי בם וידעתם כי אני ה׳: שמות י׳ ב׳:

"And in order that thou mayest tell in the hearing of thy son and thy son's son that which I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have displayed among them; and you shall know that I am the LORD." Exodus x. 2.

Yes, more than thirty-five centuries have since then elapsed, and sorrows have swept over the face of our history; tribulations like a fearful wave have passed over our defenceless heads; and still we are here to tell to the younger branches of the house of Israel of the great deeds of the Lord, and of the signs and wonders which He has wrought in Egypt and elsewhere, to prove his almighty power and to hallow his sacred Name. And nations have arisen to plunder from us our birthright; and mighty men have buckled on their armour to slay those called by the name of Jacob; but with every visitation we clung closer and closer to the ark of the covenant, we laid hold in our anguish on the horns of the altar of God, and we breathed forth our spirit still inly reverencing the great Being who had called us to his service.

And thus from every trial we arose refreshed by the grace of our Father; and more pure by the action of the fire which had removed our dross; and we felt anew the assurance that our Redeemer lives, and that to the end of time He would be our Shield, the Excellency of our salvation; and we adhered to the law which had been sanctified by our blood; and we proclaimed in our houses and in our assemblies our adherence to the faith, which has its birth in heaven and which leads to a glorious immortality.

When then we are asked, "What is purity? what is truth?" we will answer, it is the legacy which the Lord gave to our fathers, when He led them forth from Egypt; it is the precious gift, than which He could assign nothing more beatifying to the custody of the children of his servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when He intrusted the law to our feeble hands, to be preserved untouched and entire until that blissful time, when Jerusalem shall become the centre of instruction for all nations, when many and mighty people shall wander thither unto the glory of the God of Jacob, to receive thence the light which is to guide them. Then will each, will all cast aside their outward idols, the gods of silver and of gold, the works of their own hands, and also the false ideas of belief which they have cherished as an heirloom from their fathers, and then they will acknowledge with one voice, with one accord, that their possession was vanity, their hope baseless, their worship erroneous, but that they will henceforward only pray to the unchanging One, who spoke to Abraham at the covenant "between the pieces," and confirmed his word to the latest posterity of Israel.—Yea, the word

of God is pure, it is untainted by the errors of human inventions; it has sprung from the wisdom which abides with Him forever, it was established before the world was; and when the earth shall wax old as a garment, and the heavens vanish as a pillar of smoke driven away by the wind,—even then will it stand, and enlighten new worlds which may arise from God's creative word. And we shall have borrowed light from the nations? where then is their light? their knowledge? their wisdom? Let them show forth the truths they have elicited through their search and discovery, or those which have been revealed to them by prophets of the Lord who are unknown to Israel; let them convince us that they have a road of salvation pointed out to them which is not familiar to us. They cannot prove that God ever revoked his law, that He ever taught contrary to the code which He gave to Moses, or that the way He commanded us to go in is no longer one which will lead us unto his salvation. Nations however have been taught by us to know the way of God; they have learned some of the truths which are ours by inheritance; and the nearer they approach to our standard, the more they become imbued with the spirit of the Bible, the more spiritual is their system, the more consonant is it with divine wisdom.

This is then our faith, brethren, the faith of Abraham, which was perfected through the revelation to Moses, which is ours to uphold, which is ours to defend by the unconquerable resistance which we silently offer to the assaults of an unfriendly world. It is not the stony ridge which opposes the best barrier to the encroachment of the sea; for this may be broken

piece by piece, till it tumbles headlong into the boiling gulf below; but it is the shelving beach, the bed of sand, against which the waves dash and recede, and leave it und stroyed by its own inherent strength resulting from its weakness. Even so are we: we come not with spear and sword, not with mighty artillery or the power of the horse to oppose the will of the world, and to subdue it ultimately to the divine kingdom,—but by the spirit of endurance, against which all malice will exhaust itself in vain, with the word of God, which is in our mouth, which is potent to overcome the hearts of the proud, and to make ashamed the vain boasters of human intellect. Israel has been made through its instrumentality a people of worshippers, though when they were brought forth from Egypt they were degraded by slavery, sunk into a love for idols. And shall not the world at large also be attracted to its light? shall not those who now vaunt of their strength and knowledge also learn "that the Lord is the God alone in heaven above and the earth beneath, there is none else?" We have confidence in the word of promise that this event is surely approaching, though the progress be slow; and when it has been accomplished, all the evils which wickedness now inflicts on earth will be banished forever.

But whilst the state of warfare continues, let us at least be true to our charge; let the right faith dwell in our spirit; let it teach us to place a firm reliance on our God; let Him be to us our Guide in joy, our Stay in sorrow; let us be good in thought and good in deed; let us prove to the stranger who is not of the house of Israel, that the Jew loves the children

of God's creation, even as the Lord loves all; let us be distinguished at all times, no less by our conformity to the dictates of the Bible in ceremonial matters, than by an entire love of our neighbours' rights, in always dealing fairly, honestly, and benevolently with all who may come within our reach. If thus we act, if we love God because He is good, and serve mankind because He commands it unto us: we may then freely recount to our children the wonders which were wrought for us in Egypt; we may then glory in our selection as a people of God; for our conduct will be a true exponent of the spirit which dwells within. And thus can we best sanctify the name of the Lord; and who knows but that our individual exertions may hasten the blissful time of a religious union over all the world, when Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell securely, and when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall no more learn war. O how beautifully will then rise on Moriah the glorious temple which our sins have twice destroyed; how sweetly will anthems arise from the sacred courts; and how pleasantly will the message sound which will be carried to Zion, "Thy God reigneth." Israel will then dwell in their land like the sand on the seashore for multitude, and over them will rule the Prince of Peace, the beloved son of David, in whose shadow the meek of the earth will no longer dread the oppressor's power, in whose days the faint will not fear to sleep in forests because of the plunderer's violence, and when we, the sons of Jacob may arise in all the places of our dwelling to magnify God our Saviour, without our apprehending the arm of the adversary, whose power will then be

broken, whose day of retribution will then have come; whilst they who serve the Lord will rejoice in their King, and glorify themselves in the Holy One of Jacob. Amen.

Shebat 3d. } 5606.
Jan. 30th. }

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH.

Not for our sake, O Lord! but unto thy own Name give glory, because of thy loving-kindness and truth, which Thou hast ever displayed from the beginning of things until this day, and bless thy servants who approach Thee, not relying on their own righteousness, but upon thy abundant mercy which is poured out over all. Yea, we know that our merit is insufficient to demand thy favour; for the majority of our deeds are vanity, and the days of our life are as naught before Thee; since in the midst of our devotion our mind wanders away unto earthly things, and often is our very charity the effect of vain-gloriousness, that we may appear righteous in the eyes of men, preëminent among those who like ourselves are mortals, erring and fallible, and ignorant in their very wisdom. O cause us then to rely upon Thee, O Father! and exalt that which is good in us, and lift up the inclination to goodness inherent in us, that we may be able to struggle successfully against the power of sin which

lieth in wait for us, from the day of our birth until our last breath is drawn. And establish Thou, O Lord! the work of our hands, and may thy favour and goodness ever keep watch over us. Amen.

Brethren!

We have before this insisted that the law which God was pleased to bestow on his people was not alone intended to give them ideas of the Divinity, but was especially calculated to be a charter of freedom, of equal rights for all the inhabitants of the land. In many ancient nations, and in many modern ones likewise, there have existed and exist even now different classes into which the inhabitants of the countries are divided, and this to such a degree that those called the lower orders have hardly any personal rights or title to property, except what the higher and more favoured are pleased to grant unto them. In all absolute governments, where the will of one man rules the land, the sovereign, or political chief, has always been looked upon as the fountain whence all gifts, offices, titles to land, prerogatives, and acts of grace have flowed; it was he who endowed his vassals with their estates; it was he who called his favourites from the lower ranks and conferred upon them names which separated them from the masses as effectually as though they had belonged to different races; it was he who could pardon all offences, even the most heinous, against the rights and persons of individuals, and annul, if so he willed it, ancient laws and usages by his mere word, and enact in their stead such ordinances as his fancy might dictate. And then those who were landed proprietors, or so-called nobles,

were, in their turn, tyrants over their subordinates, and many of them exercised the right of pronouncing judgment against the life of their serfs, and executed it too mercilessly; since the existence of such inferior beings was of no moment when contrasted with the prerogative of the noble-born lord of a castle. In brief, instead of the governed being the source of power wherewith the governors were endowed for the benefit of the whole nation, the rule was reversed, the executive authority was the main spring, the actual state, from which the governed obtained as much of liberty and security as comported with the pleasure and interest of the chief and his nobles: whilst the latter, in their turn, were nothing but the tools of the former, and they had often, themselves, to feel the iron hand of power, when their destruction was deemed of the least service to the despot. Even in the so-called free governments, where the power was lodged in the hands of several, examples are not wanting to prove that the liberties and rights of the poor were but little provided for; they who had obtained the control of the state exercised it for their own selfish ends, and those who stood beneath them might fare as best they could. Far different was it with our state: it was God's purpose to have a nation of worshippers composed of freemen, whose soul could aspire to higher things than mere earthly pursuits, whose spirit was not to be crushed by the irresponsible will of rulers or masters, but every man, every woman, every child, whether belonging to Israel or not was to be left in possession of property, of liberty, and of life, until either had been forfeited for some well-known, well-defined, and clearly established

crime, upon the judgment of independent judges, the choice of the people themselves. It is therefore not a mere political declamation to speak of the commonwealth of the Jews, but a truly religious topic to investigate the nature of the laws of our land, inasmuch as they are founded in the nature of the institutions which have the Creator of the world and the Redeemer of Israel for their Author. Let us just follow the connexion of the Scriptural text; for though it is divided off in sections and verses, it is at length but one continuance of the same inspiration and of the same wisdom which announced the whole of the scheme of revelation. To proceed: The Israelites when in Egypt laboured under the most intolerable oppression and political subjection; they had no hopes but in the clemency of their taskmasters; for when these increased their burdens, they found no redress in their appeal to the ruler of the land, as we read in the fifth chapter of Exodus. When their cry, therefore, ascended to the Lord from their toil, He resolved to redeem them from slavery in accordance with his covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob their fathers, whom He had loved because of their righteousness. It was then that Moses, one of their own body, whilst feeding the flocks which belonged to his father-in-law, a man not descended from Israel, saw the vision of God, who, by his appearing to him, and enlightening his understanding with more wisdom than he possessed before, and giving him more courage and endurance than were natural to him, conferred on him the mission and the ability to effect the liberation of his brothers who were in bondage. But it was not merely to be made free from burdensome

labour that this liberation should be effected, but in order that the people, when free, might learn to serve the Lord, the true God, the One who alone is all-powerful in heaven and on earth, and to acknowledge Him alone in all generations and to be forever faithful to his laws. We all know that the mission had its effect, the bonds of slavery were broken, the captives were bidden to go free from their prison-houses, and they actually were brought to the foot of Sinai, where they were visited by the glory of God, who communicated to them his will, assumed over them the kingly rule which they cheerfully accepted, and announced himself as their national God, who, though thus proclaimed the Deity of Israel, was nevertheless the Lord of all men, the Possessor of all things.

But how was his divine and royal rule to be established? Even by the enforcement of an enlightened morality, by subordinating the people to each other's rights, by their being a mutual security for the peace and the undisturbed enjoyment of his own by every member of their state and society. The same awful Voice which spoke, "I am the Lord thy God," said "Thou shalt not steal." The same Being who spoke "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," also said "Thou shalt not commit murder." In truth, strictly speaking, the ten commandments contain one more moral law than precepts relating to God alone. Yea, the one of these relating to the Sabbath, the weekly day of rest, is in itself as much a moral law as a ceremonial act referring to the service of the Divinity. It is true that it is instituted as a sign that we acknowledge the truth of the Creator, that it is He alone who called forth the vast structure of the uni-

verse from frightful nonentity; it is true that we are to celebrate it, as Jews, because we have been bondmen in Egypt, and have been thence redeemed by the Power who alone can break the pride of tyrants and rend their fetters in twain. But it is also given to bring rest to the weary, to confer hope on those who toil, to refresh those whose hard fate it is to know of no cessation from labour, to whom the rising of the sun is a signal for renewed exertions, and to whom his setting only grants a brief repose. It is calculated to soften the rigours of servitude, to bid him rejoice who looks to the will of others for the incentive to his movements; it is admirably fitted to unbend the mind from contemplating its hard fate, to those who have to seek their daily bread by the labour of their own hands; it bids all to breathe freely; nay, the beast of burden will not then need to bear his rider, and the ox may low in the grass and stand idly during the noonday in the cooling pool of water without being urged by the now resting husbandman to tug at his yoke. It is God alone who is to reign on that blessed day. He then lets his sun shine, or causes his rain to fall, and the grass comes out of the earth; and the wonderful change in the seed intrusted to the soil goes on bringing it forth above the ground in the greenness and beauty which belong to the young shoots of the life-sustaining corn; and the trees are covered with snow-white or finely-painted blossoms; and the fields are ripening under the gentle waving of a vernal breeze and the mild radiance of the star of day; and all the while man's agency is not needed here, he has ploughed, he has cast abroad the seed, he has pruned the vine, or

trimmed the tree; but it is now the Lord's own acts which bless his toil, and what he commenced in doubt and fear, now is brought to perfection by the will of Him who alone blesses the seasons. Ay! it is on the Sabbath that the Lord reigns alone; then He blesses without human labour, and his elements bring to perfection what the insufficient skill of man has scattered abroad, intrusting it to the keeping of the Creator. And who would not be a servant, where One so bountiful blesses? what taskmaster would refuse rest to those beneath his control, when the Lord of all promises to bless his rest? And who sees not that thus refraining from our avocations is enlarging the amount of human happiness, whilst we prove our subjection to the kingdom of Heaven? How true is then our proposition, that the divine and royal rule of our God must necessarily consist in our promoting the happiness of each other, seeing that in serving Him we will truly bring blessing to all who need our aid. We will not now enlarge upon the necessity of the day of rest to all classes of men, as it is not our purpose to-day to speak of it except incidentally: I wanted merely to illustrate the benevolence of its institution, and how it does really promote the welfare of society by enforcing the rule of being just to all, whether the high and exalted or the poor and lowly.

In this wise the legislation of Sinai was calculated to exhibit to the Israelites, how they should look upon one another and upon themselves, as children all of one God, all as subject to Him, and responsible to each other. As now there can be but one Head to a state consisting of men who think thus, and this head their God and Creator, without whom they cannot

exist: it follows that no single individual of this community can have any right to regard himself as better, in things referring to individual prerogatives, than his neighbours, unless these have voluntarily transferred to him certain rights for the benefit of themselves; and the individual who is thus invested with them is then but a servant, an agent of those who empower him to bear authority. They are in truth bound by their choice; but he too is bound by the compact which renders him the chief; for if he violates his trust, those who have chosen him, or tacitly permitted him to assume authority, are of right empowered to lower him from the position which he unworthily occupies. For when we take it for granted that all men are equal, which doctrine is so emphatically taught in the Bible: then the rulers are made for the state, not the state for the rulers; and hence it results that there is no personal difference between the various individuals composing the commonwealth; that whether they are rich or poor, in authority or subordinate, there is but one arbiter to decide between them, and to dispose of their persons and goods, and this arbiter is the law of the land, administered by those who are chosen for their knowledge, moral worth, and integrity to expound it, and to decide according to its behests, leaning, in all cases of doubt or uncertainty, to favour the accused; because his personal rights and the property which he possesses ought not to be taken from him, except upon the clearest possible conviction, that he deserves the doom pronounced against him. The whole tendency of the Decalogue, the supreme constitution of the Hebrew state, was therefore to substitute right and law for

power and violence. God dispenses life and blessings; He institutes justice; He abhors robbery and murder; He commands truth and integrity: hence every man must be left free and uncontrolled in all things wherein he is not restrained by an enactment previously existing; and therefore no one can be punished or abridged of his rights without a previous warning with regard to the deed he is about to commit.—You will easily understand, brethren, how the pure belief in the Godhead which we adore has this political idea as its natural consequence. We know of no power in nature to which we are bound to render homage, save Him alone; we have received no knowledge of any being that has a substantive existence, except our God; whatever is, proceeds from Him; whatever happens, occurs only because He is content that it should be done. How then can there be any right inhering in one creature which the other one has not to an equal degree, unless this additional right has been conferred by the direct agency of God, or that of any special portion of mankind who are combined as free agents for a particular end? If we then see a man preëminently intelligent, or otherwise endowed, it is a gift granted to him from above, not something which he has obtained from his own inherent power or special merit; and if such a one should be chosen by direct revelation, as in the case of the prophets and the first judges and kings of Israel, or by the concurrence, through election, of those who are personally interested: it is at last but to acknowledge that Providence has granted the particular endowment to its possessor for the general good of all, not for his own special benefit solely. Tyranny, there-

fore, is utterly incompatible with our religion; arbitrary government, or the substitution of the will of one man in the room of the law, cannot exist with the true spirit of the revelation which we have received. The ruler, as well as the people, is bound by the religious commandments and the civil enactments; he cannot set aside the smallest one of them without infringing that charter by which he is retained in authority; and consequently he loses the claim to govern, by which alone he can be regarded superior to the rest of the people.

It was therefore to be expected that, after the Lord had made himself known as the God of eternal justice and truth, He should take especial care to establish justice on a firm footing, and on such principles as never would require any amendment. Other states were and are to this day formed by the will of the governors, that is, by grant from the crown where the authority is vested in the person of one man, and by legislative resolves where the people themselves govern through their representatives. But we were constituted a body politic by redemption through the sole agency of our Sovereign and Chief; consequently it was but proper that the government should proceed from Him; since without his aid directly given we could never have been made a people. It was not with us, as with other nations who have become a community through the force of arms, by which means arbitrary rulers were compelled to acknowledge our independence; for we were taken out from the midst of another people by no will or act of our own, nay, against the wishes of many, who would rather serve the Egyptians than perish in the wilderness. When,

therefore, our chains were broken, and when the yoke was taken from our neck, we had to recognize the mercy of the Eternal One, who had done these great things for us. Yet by receiving his law we lost none of our freedom; by accepting his commandments we merely submitted to the only legitimate authority from whom the charter of our liberties could of right proceed. I use the word "liberties" advisedly; for though our religion contains many restrictions in a moral point of view, in which I include the ceremonial prohibitions, it embraces the utmost freedom of action for every individual member of the state in whatever concerns his person and pursuits. Herein he was perfectly unshackled. He could travel whithersoever he pleased; he could follow any handicraft in whatever place it suited him best; he could himself enter the councils of the people and of the elders, on all occasions when these assemblies met; he was untainted by crime till it was proved upon him; and not even the highest authority in the land could do aught to injure him without violating the very institutions under which they all lived. There was one principle of a twofold kind which pervaded the whole of our constitution, we were servants alone of God, but among ourselves and to each other we were brothers, friends, neighbours; and if you search well into the book of the law, you will find no other idea as the basis of our code, no matter how the question may appear at first sight. In general, as you will discover, there is no distinction in moral duties, whether they relate to the Israelite or the gentile; but in others there is a distinction made, not as relates to the law of the Israelites, but as regards the customs of the nations

who do not yet acknowledge the law of God. The exceptions which occur to me just now, are those with regard to domestic servitude, the food which is prohibited to Jews, and the taking of interest for money loaned to strangers. But you will easily understand, that we were not *bound* to own slaves, nor to loan on interest, nor to give or sell the food prohibited to us to others. The gentiles did not consider these things as wrong in olden times, and do not consider them now among the things forbidden to them; and in not prohibiting them as regarded the stranger among us, it was more in the light of toleration than an exception to civil franchise. But who that knows anything of ancient and modern usages with regard to servitude and the rights of the creditor over the debtor, does not see an immeasurable difference in the power of the Jewish master and lender and that granted by other codes? With us the slave had his rights; an infringement of these gave him his freedom; the debtor could not be incarcerated for his inability to discharge his obligation; since the law is silent with respect to any such summary mode of enforcing payment, or rather revenging the poverty of the honest man whom misfortunes have reduced to a state of dependence. Hence there is in truth a universal system of freedom running through the entire legislation, respecting all who came or may come hereafter under its influence and the obedience to its separate enactments.

The first thing, therefore, that was proper to be done after the Lord had made himself known as our Sovereign, was to institute the special laws which were to be obeyed in conformity to the general princi-

ples which we have already developed, in order that each individual might know how he was to act, and to whom he was amenable. Scarcely therefore had the thunders of Sinai ceased to terrify the people, the fire of glory yet blazed on the top of the mount: when the prophet was instructed, before all other things, respecting the civil institutions of the future Israelitish state; the worship, the festivals, the ceremonies, all were laid aside for the time being, in order that the principles of justice might first be established; and the Lord began by saying,

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם :

שמות כא׳ א׳ :

"And these are the laws of justice which thou shalt lay before them." Exodus xxi. 1.

And He then proceeded by defining the personal rights of the individuals who should compose the state. And now behold what the first principle is, nothing else than the inalienable right to personal freedom. Observe well, that we were not guaranteed against the reverses of fortune because we were God's people; on the contrary, our legislation was to be for a practical community, where men associate to labour, to study, or to traffic, where some are idle, others industrious, where some are improvident, others frugal. The Israelitish commonwealth was to consist of men as they were, with virtuous habits no more than with vicious inclinations; hence the results of riches and poverty, or rather of enrichment and impoverishment, were to be witnessed as a matter of necessity to a con-

siderable extent, just as in any other state. But it was the part of wisdom to endeavour to make these results as little injurious to the commonwealth as possible. For wherever you see great wealth in a state, you may expect equally great poverty; and for every palace for the great which you rear, you have to put up a hovel for the wretchedly poor. The extremes of fortune alienate the feelings; the very rich does not respect the poor; the very poor hates or envies those who are so much above him. Whenever a man has many hundreds who depend upon him for their employment which is to give them their daily bread, you may be sure that he will in most cases endeavour to make them feel his power and to subject them to his pleasure. Estates, if permitted to accumulate in families, especially if the proprietors thereof are allowed to acquire a long list of retainers and dependents on their bounty, will, in a more or less degree, establish grievous inequalities in a community; and the end will be the establishment of classes, respectable not for their personal worth, despised not for any wrong they have done, but simply because they belong to one circle of the exclusively great, or because they appertain to the masses whose lot is toil, daily renewed, and who have to live by what their hands bring them for their support. I care not what the form of government is which produces these results: it is not a system of equal rights, because the humble cannot assert them when they are assailed. But the laws of justice which Moses was ordered to lay before Israel struck at once at the root of social inequality. Property could not be alienated for a longer period than the jubilee, be this near at hand

or far off; no one could possess endless parks for his hunting grounds or pleasure gardens, whilst his poor neighbour had not a rod of ground to raise a few vegetables for his half-starved children, cooped up day by day in noisome palaces which wealth erects ostensibly for the production of fabrics, but chiefly for its own aggrandizement. And side by side with the law against the absolute sale of landed estate, was presented the ordinance against personal servitude under any circumstances beyond the same period of the fiftieth year, should it even have been voluntarily continued in at the end of the limit of six years, through the love of the servant for his master's house. At that year the land had to return to its owner, the servant could not stay in the house of the wealthy: he had to be free, whether he would or not. Thus the Israelite had always an interest in the state, an interest in himself; he was not hopelessly bound to the chariot of the great; there was an hour of freedom for him; and joyously the members of an impoverished family could meet again, when the year of freedom was proclaimed, on their own paternal domain, free from bodily restraint, loaded with the gifts of their temporary masters, again enabled to rear up the decayed fortunes of their family, reduced perhaps by the extravagance and crimes of an unworthy father. Yes, God alone was King over the state; the lands, the men, the women, the wealth, were all his; He distributed the possession of whatever man could claim as property among the individuals of the state; and who should dare to deprive them of that which the Chief had granted? Understand well all these restrictions were no prohibitions against individual industry and

enterprise; you might amass by commerce and labour any amount of wealth you pleased, enjoy the luxury thus obtained; only you had to remain a simple member of the state, and the poor had the same rights with yourselves; and if an humble man was elevated by the voice of the people for his virtues and knowledge to the office of judge, his authority would bind you and restrain you in all lawful manner equally with others. There was to be no aristocracy; its existence was rendered impossible; God alone was the Chief, all men in the state equals before Him, and among themselves.

Much more could I add in analyzing our code of justice; but for the present I have proved enough to show its perfect adaptation to form a free state, a community of equals. The Lord who is so exalted regards all his creatures alike; and they are to Him of no more value whether they be clad in regal purple or in the rags of the beggar. Hence his law was to rebuke the arrogance of the proud, who, because they are wealthy, or happen to be born of families who have some claims to public regard, look down with scorn upon those not so fortunately circumstanced. How grateful ought we to have been then to the Lord, who in a time when servitude was the fate of the greater portion of mankind, broke the bonds of the lowly and bade them to stand erect and free before Heaven! How gloriously might we have stood forth as a light to the world, had we but valued the gift thus granted to us! But alas! we would not be free, we craved the customs of the gentiles; and hence are we become outcasts into all lands, trampled upon by every vain mortal who hates our race and

name. Still has the spirit of our law always burnt brightly within our soul; we were once made free by the arm of the Omnipotent, and free were the souls of all sons of Israel, nay, even when they perished with an ignominious death for the sake of the law. Only those were slaves who fled because there was danger, who preferred to live because they feared to die. But the day will come when tyrants shall quail before the spirit of our legislation, when sceptres will be shivered and crowns be cast in the dust, when the Lord alone will reign and his sanctuary be among us; and then will we fulfil the command,

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם : שמות כה' ח':

"And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them."

And on that day God will be King alone, and all flesh will worship Him only. Amen.

Adar 1st. } 5606.
Feb. 27th. }

DISCOURSE XVII.

SCRIPTURAL PREDICTIONS.

"O Thou great in counsel and mighty in deeds, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of man, to give to every one according to his ways and the fruit of his deeds!" look down from thy high abode in the realms of eternity upon thy people Israel in their lowly state in all their dispersions, and guard them by thy might from the evil designs of those who hate them. Fearful are the reports which are brought to us from afar; we are told that the adversaries of thy Name have joined counsel against the sons of thy covenant, to banish them from the earth, through the adoption of a worship which is odious to thy law. Let then, O almighty Father! our prayer ascend unto thy ears, and bend Thou the pride of the presumptuous, and frustrate their devices, as Thou hast often done, when men arose to swallow up the remnant of thy adorers. Behold we are powerless! we come not with spear and sword, nor with the thunder of the artillery, nor with the swiftness of the horse, nor the power of a mighty fleet; but only in Thee is our salvation, no less from the power of the wicked, than the danger from sin which threatens our soul. O let thy goodness then be displayed; be Thou our Shield of defence, the Rock of our salvation; and from the ends of the earth shall songs ascend unto Thee, hymns of deliverance shall fill our lips, when we are relieved

from the fear of the oppressor, when our chains are broken. And may it be farther Thy will to hasten the time of our redemption, when we need no longer tremble because of the power of the oppressor, when Thou alone wilt be the One God for all, and thy anointed servant reign alone on earth. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In times like these, when men boldly declare themselves against the hopes of Israel, when men who ought to instil, from the nature of their position in our communities, confidence and a firm reliance upon the promises of Scripture into the souls which are bowed down by the weight of governmental oppression, join themselves to those who afflict us by their mad endeavour to gainsay, by their teaching, all that we ever were taught as the meaning of the words of Holy Writ—at such a time as this, it is the duty of those who are called upon to teach, to examine with the congregations at large the words of the Bible, to see what they actually do tell us, what they inform us of, concerning the deeds and the purposes of God. To many, indeed, the Bible is a mere record of past events and of certain opinions which were promulgated in times past; such persons call themselves Jews, it is true; but the blessed book is scarcely regarded by them as the record of revelation, the evidence of a Wisdom the ken of which is not limited by the nature of the event, or whether it has come to pass already, or whether it is to happen in times after this. They examine, criticize, approve, reject, as they deem the texts suiting to their taste or otherwise; but they do not open the pages whence so much

light beams to the humble inquirer with that fear and trembling, which the child of God does feel, when he enters upon the study of the legacy of truth which was handed down from heaven. No wonder, then, that such inquirers, as just mentioned, can discover in the Bible precisely what they please, and that they deduce thence doctrines the very reverse of what we have received from our fathers, and that they endeavour to establish in their stead ideas more consonant with the march of intellect, than the antiquated notions of ages of barbarism. But blessed be that barbarism, if such it be, which inspired hope and trust in an entire people under the most adverse circumstances, in positions which, but for this very peculiarity of thought, would have obliterated from the page of history the very name perhaps of the Jewish nation.—Be this barbarism, if you will; but it is that species which must survive the enlightenment of the day, which is destined to sink before the progress of some new notions which are to spring up hereafter. But this idea of ours, which is so peculiarly Jewish, sees in the Bible the standard of truths—not indeed the truths of science, more of which are constantly elicited by the march of discovery and investigation, by which every age acquires more knowledge of simple nature than its predecessor—but of morals and the conceptions we have of God and his works. These cannot be enlarged by discovery; in these the first age that was taught was necessarily as wise as the most distant which we can think of; since man's research has no power to discover of the Deity the least more than He has chosen to reveal to us himself; and because, in regard to precepts, there can be nothing

added to what we have received already more than thirty centuries ago. It were vain, then, we will admit, to regard the Bible as containing all the discoveries of modern science; but equally vain would it be to measure its doctrinal truths by the standard of a newfangled philosophy, no doubt destined to perish away from the earth, after it has prevailed its brief period, like all its predecessors. We therefore cannot relinquish our views of Scripture, because of the taunts that they are behind the age; we cannot surrender our hopes in the promises of the Lord, because the men of the day assert that they are not compatible with the advance of human intellect and the refinement of society. We will for a moment leave out of view the fact that we are dealing with revelation, with the Spirit of wisdom, to whom all things are known, and confine our remarks to the position of human society as we find it: and what then has it now above preceding ages, to induce us to change our opinions? Let us see: When Abraham first taught the truths of God, there were heathens and unbelievers; he stood almost alone on earth in the belief which he entertained; when Moses received the Law, the worship of the Most High was confined to the people who had gone forth from Egypt. And what is the position of the world now? The very selfsame it was then: the principle of the unity of God with the code of morals which was revealed with it, is the inheritance only of the congregation of Jacob; consequently, so far as our relative position is concerned, we stand in the same point, in reference to mankind, where we always have stood, where we are alone, to all intents and purposes; and if we ever had

any mission to fulfil, we have to do it to this very hour. Whatever Scripture therefore teaches with regard to duty (we speak now on the score of reason alone) is necessarily as requisite now as ever it was, the motive which prompted such institution not having yet ceased by any occurrence which history relates; and, since the doctrines, upon which these enactments are founded, are either as true as they ever were, or were as false then as they are now, it follows that, if they were absolutely founded on fact in old times, they must be necessarily admitted as true at this present moment; and whereas we cannot imagine any circumstances which could alter this state of things, we come to the conclusion, which no show of reasoning can gainsay, that the truths of Scripture must always be the same, without change, or addition, or diminution: they are a perfect system in themselves, and depend upon one another, if not from the very nature of the case, at least from the fact of their being emanations of the revealed will and knowledge of the Lord. Human intellect has advanced in many discoveries; society has become refined in many things above the characters treated of in the Bible; but this argues only that the spirit of our revelation has extended its influence far and wide, and that its true import of mercy and universal philanthropy has penetrated deeper and deeper, as time progresses, than it had done in the first ages of its promulgation. All this does not prove that the spirit of our age is superior to that of the Bible, or that we must hasten to throw it out of view, if we wish to keep pace with the civilization which is spreading around us; on the contrary, it would seem to be the

part of wisdom, of human wisdom and foresight, I mean, to endeavour to come up closer and closer to the standard of mercy, truth and obedience which it enjoins, so that it may have the best and happiest influence on us in all the relations of life, and that by our exhibiting its beauty we may draw others to acknowledge its truth, and be improved by its instruction.

But we as Jews have a higher motive to respect the Scriptures than mere human reasoning, even if this be based upon the acknowledged truth of Scriptural doctrines and precepts. We are not to believe because a doctrine has been *proved* true, but because we have *received* it; we are not to practise a precept only when we see its reasonableness, but for the reason that our God commanded us to do so. Judaism is in fact a system of faith *and* obedience, and everything short of this is not religion, is not yielding ourselves implicitly to the guidance of our Father. I do not mean to say that there is any objection to our proving our opinions philosophically true, or our acts established upon the clearest principles of reason; for thus we would fortify divine truths by our own experience, and impress them in this way the more strongly upon our conviction; but I contend that we are to have a higher motive than such a procedure could possibly establish in our minds: we must have grounds for obedience, even where our reason is not sufficient to satisfy itself. For were the mere arguing a point satisfactorily the standard of belief and action, every human being would necessarily have to be left to choose what he would believe and do; and we should thus have as many systems of religion as there

are classes of thinkers. But this would certainly be the reverse of a system of peace; for each man would then assuredly endeavour to make his ideas, however grotesque they were, accepted by and acceptable to the many. Under such a state of things, no Scriptures would be requisite as a guide to religion, seeing that their contents would be modified by the whim and fancy of every one of their readers; in other words, a system homogeneous in its principles would be out of the question; and the only conformity possible would arise from the voluntary assent of a number of persons to certain assumed principles, which conformity could endure only till some new fancy were held up to the admiration of the public. The rise and progress of sects, the most absurd even, prove that this view of the question is correct; and it hence results, that although it is impossible to believe in anything absolutely absurd and contrary to common sense, as the doctrines of many sects really are, it is equally absurd to reject as untrue everything the reason of which is not at once apparent to us. For our not discovering the reason of every proposition does not prove it unreasonable; because, in the first place, we may not be well informed of the attending circumstances, or, secondly, we may not have natural capacity enough to comprehend it, should we even have all the materials for forming a judgment placed at our disposal. In the one case, others better instructed may be able to understand the matter, in the other, those who have a better natural capacity. It is therefore reasonable that we should receive as true some things which we do not know from our own experience and knowledge, provided only they be not

contrary to reason; for no one can be expected to believe a proposition which to him is impossible of comprehension, though even here he ought not to make up his mind hastily, before he has studied and weighed the matter carefully in all its bearings. It results hence that, much as we admit free inquiry, and much as we are at liberty to seek to illustrate our opinions and acts by satisfactory reasoning, we are bound, as Jews, to admit the doctrines taught by the Scriptures, as we have received them, though, on the one hand, our own reasoning would not have led us to such conclusions, and, on the other, we are not able to see clearly how the facts announced as to happen hereafter may actually be developed. The former is the case with nearly all the ceremonial enactments; if we had to make for ourselves a system of religious duties, we should probably not have thought of instituting a Sabbath, nor prohibited the flesh of the swine, or of fish without fins and scales. The latter is the case with the predictions scattered through the Bible; for we cannot understand how they are to be accomplished, if we are guided merely by the analogy derived from the ordinary events of history, either of ages long past, or of what is taking place under our own eyes. Notwithstanding all this, since we are Israelites, we are bound, as recipients of the law of God and the promises which He has made known to us, to acquiesce in the duties which are demanded of us, and to believe in the annunciation of future things which have not yet been accomplished in the progress of events. We could, if it were necessary, point to many of the predictions which have already been confirmed by their accomplishment, and argue hence, as

we have done before, that the others yet remaining will also be accomplished in due time; but, for our present purpose, this is useless, since we wish to establish that, on grounds of reason, we ought to confide in all which we are taught in Scripture, since we once must admit that the basis of our religion is of divine origin. It would be a singular procedure surely, to dissect the word of God as critics do a book presented to their review for the first time,—to approve of one part, and to condemn the other, for no better reason than that our taste is not satisfied. For who will warrant us that, in such a manner, we should not arrive at length at the proposition to amend the ten commandments even? to add to them an eleventh and twelfth precept, or to limit them to nine or eight? —For, by all the evidence accessible to us, there is no material difference in all the precepts and dogmas of our religion; and though some from their nature, or the manner of their first publication, may seem to have a stronger weight and a more imposing appearance, still they are all exhibited as having the same origin. To reject therefore any would invalidate the whole; to declare one unreasonable, whilst the other is held up as the height of perfection, would be to advance that the whole were contrary to reason and unworthy of confidence. There may, at times, obtrude themselves to the mind of even the most pious doubts respecting some points of religion; no one will deny this; but, instead of its being made the cause of rejecting the matters concerning which these painful doubts arise as untrue, it will be the part of true wisdom and proper humility to ask in prayer for more light, and to endeavour to seek for information

from those who are better instructed. And herein will the truth of Scripture be best established: the more we investigate, the more information we bring to our inquiry, the more plain and evident will all appear to us; and if one search does not suffice, let the attempt be renewed a hundred times, till doubts vanish, and the divine lustre shines as bright as the light of day. This is not idle declamation; let those answer who have grown old in the wisdom of the Lord, who have endeavoured to draw light from the only true fountain whence it springs; and these will tell you, that their souls did imbibe instruction and peace the more they searched, the more they made themselves familiar with the words and language of the Bible.

To return therefore to our first proposition: As Jews, we are bound to look upon the Scriptures as something more than a mere subject for learned criticism; we must believe, if we wish to earn the favour of our heavenly Father. He has in them given us his laws, all the knowledge of Him which we in any manner whatever can possess, and revealed to us all the insight into futurity which we are able to obtain by any possibility whatever. Let it be once for all understood, that no mere human foresight, no matter how deeply learned and experienced a man may be, can penetrate beyond the moment in which we are; with the present ends our knowledge, the morrow, nay, the next moment is all a dreary blank, a waste of uncertainty to us; consequently, nothing can be known of the future by human means; and hence it follows that, no matter what any one may advance to the contrary about improbability or impossibility con-

cerning the predictions of Scripture, there is no man bold enough to declare that the things foretold cannot occur, because circumstances now existing forbid their occurrence. We can speak only, as said already, of the present, and in that we are limited to the little we know, and this is surely little indeed; but who can aver that a state of things may not arise, which will not alone render the assertions of the prophets probable and practicable, but also absolutely necessary?

Look at the progress of science; things pronounced within the lifetime of many of you as the wild chimeras of an overheated fancy, have become matters of everyday experience; movements deemed impossible, progress believed unattainable, are facts at the present hour which no one will be mad enough to deny. The vapour of water has been forced into our service, to connect with undreamed-of speed distant countries, with the punctuality almost of clock-work; the principle which produces the lightning of heaven has been brought into play, to write messages as quick as the hand can move between distant points in a moment of time; the ray of light has been found potent enough to inscribe an exact counterfeit of an object upon a metal surface, with unerring certainty and with inconceivable rapidity; a subtle agent, the working of which can scarcely be traced, is made to produce fac-similes of anything subjected to its action.* All this has been accomplished with the working of natural powers, which our fathers did not think of:

* The steamship and car, the electric telegraph, the Daguerreotype, and the electrotype.

and shall we say, that, in the moral progress of events in the history of nations, revolutions as great and greater than these may not be impending? The man of the present day, armed with the aid of steam and electricity, is a much more powerful agent than he was without them less than a hundred years ago; and who can say, that these very agents, the power of which is not yet fully developed, and may not be for centuries to come, will not be made instrumental, in the providence of God, for the establishment of his chosen people in the ancient land of their inheritance? See! the chain of iron-ways is extending gradually over the earth; from shore to shore of distant seas the car of commerce will ere long come thundering in few brief hours loaded with freight and anxious travellers; countries, once separated by journeys of months and years, will be brought together in the space of a few days; and there, where the continent terminates, will be in waiting the fire-impelled, wonderful ship, to carry away the merchandise and the travellers to lands beyond the heaving sea; and over every continent will stretch the wires of the mysterious power which a revelation almost has made subservient to man's will, to write to them afar the demands and wishes of their distant kindred. And may then not these means be called into action, to summon together the dispersed of Israel, and to waft them away to their own land, to dwell there under the sway of him who is "to rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth?" The description is indefinite, we will admit; but its very uncertainty as to limits leaves scope to the imagination: it may include the whole habitable globe, and all

lands may be rendered subject to the benignant Messiah, whose breath is to be justice, and whose word, the safety of the meek! Now, indeed, the redemption of God's people from the oppression under which they labour, appears well-nigh impossible; their state of dissension and their internal divisions seem to forbid that they will be united on the mountains of Israel; but all this is nothing in the good time of the Lord, who may and will (if there is truth in the Bible, and who of us will deny this?) accomplish what we deem impracticable now, by means which are yet to be developed in the field of natural sciences; and if not by these, then by acts which will, confessedly impossible, be nevertheless displayed, as were the miracles in Egypt, so that the pleasure of the Lord will be fulfilled. The power of the Master of all is not to be circumscribed by our notions of strength or wisdom; and hence it is not for us to determine, that He cannot do what He says it is his purpose of accomplishing.

The doctrine of a redeemer, and the hope that there one day would be an end to all our sorrows arising from the hostility of mankind to the household of Israel, have been from ancient days deeply rooted in the minds of all descendants of Abraham. They ever saw, in the present and the past condition of the world, a state of transition which is to be terminated, whenever the time for the change has come. We always viewed ourselves as permanently established in the number of nations, and that no event could possibly occur, which would have a contrary effect. If, then, men arose in their fury to destroy our nationality, by dooming thousands to death, by banishing others in want of every necessary of life, and by com-

pelling others to change their belief outwardly; those who were true Israelites, though they beheld such a destruction, did not therefore despair of the existence of their religion. They had a confidence in their breast that a change was impending, that their oppressors would not triumph forever, that the overruling watchfulness of the Lord would certainly end their afflictions, so soon as He deemed them enough. They therefore met all the hardships which were imposed on them as a trial of faith, and submitted to them with that resignation which had its source only in a confident rectitude of purpose, a resignation which extorted the respect and wonder of even their tormentors. There seem to have been seasons in those centuries of barbarism, when the number of Israelites must have been reduced to the lowest level, when probably not one-fourth of the few now belonging to us were left to profess their adhesion to our laws and customs. Still they trusted on, and from them have sprung the growing millions who know of no god, save the Eternal, of no saviour, save the One who is the Creator and the Lord of all; and they have handed down their hopes, together with their laws, to us their descendants; and these sainted spirits, who now enjoy their eternal reward, expect that we should yet cherish the same faith which supported them,—not yield those beatifying hopes which made them rise above all their sorrows and tribulations. Israel is not yet free; no redeemer has yet come to Zion; the many of us have yet to dread the tyrant's power; many of us may yet have to die the martyr's death, to seal their love to God with the blood which courses through their veins. Who of us,

then, is there that dares deprive our suffering brothers of their hope which supported our fathers? who of Israel's seed can be base enough to extinguish that spark which enkindled a bright flame of trust and childlike confidence in the many martyrs, who pointed out to us the way of salvation amidst the cruel terrors which tried their souls? O long may that fatal day be distant, when this destructive opinion shall take root! O it would be a fatal day! for then would perish the feeling of joy which the humble Israelite experiences whenever he looks around him, and sees, beyond the ruins of all the greatness which meets his aching sight, the brighter glory which is to shine over rebuilt Jerusalem, the newly-erected temple on Moriah!

The prophets in truth foretell the reign of a prince who is to be above the people, yet one of them; for we read:

והנשיא בתוכם בבואם יבוא ובצאתם יצא :
יחז' מו' יז':

"And the prince shall among them come in, as they come in, and in their going forth he shall go forth." Ezekiel xliv. 10: see also xlv. 17.

He shall be the ruler who is to govern in meekness and right, and judge in equity; and long have we looked for him: during the second temple he did not appear; for eighteen centuries of sorrow he has been absent from us. But shall we not look forward to the day when he is to be in the temple, among the worshippers of the One Supreme, making his sacrifices, as described by the prophet, and distinguished

only by his superior endowments among all Israel? Surely, the word of God has gone forth, and it will not fail of seeing its fulfilment; and the day will yet come, when the streets of Jerusalem will resound with the shouts of thousands of the faithful hastening thither on the great seasons of the festivals, and with hymns to the Lord who is good, and whose mercy endures forever. Amen.

Adar 29th.
March 29th. } 5606.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THOUGHTS ON THE PASSOVER.

Father of mankind! we adore Thee because of thy abundant goodness which every where meets our view; for, from the rising of the sun to his setting, thy mercies sustain all, and all hail Thee as their Creator. And the wisdom which dwells with us is thy gift also, and the understanding and knowledge which distinguish the children of men too are thine, and from thy superfluous stores hast Thou bestowed them on us. How unwise are we then if we rebel against thy instruction! how lost are we whenever we presume to be wiser than thy will! Nevertheless has this been always our course; we loved the imaginings of our own hearts, and sought for the darkness to cover ourselves withal, whilst with Thee was ever the abundance of a light effulgent. We, therefore, stum-

bled on our path like the blind staggers on his uncertain way, and we have been brought again and again to feel the weight of our iniquity. But, O our Father! Thou art mighty to save, thy powers know of no diminution, thy years of no decay; and, therefore, we entreat Thee to be our support as of yore, to make us quick in understanding thy ways, as Thou causedst us to be on that glorious day when thou didst redeem us from bondage, and bring us to the foot of the blessed mount whence thy majestic voice spoke to us the words of truth from amidst fire and thunder. And with thy mercy bless those who bless us, and overthrow the adversary who lays heavily on us the weight of human power; for we are thy servants, the descendants of those whom Thou didst appoint to show forth thy glory. And thus shall we be acknowledged as thy children in whom Thou delightest, and become the harbingers of thy glory to all ages without ending. Amen.

Brethren!

In reference to the festival which we celebrate at this season, we read in Exodus (xii. 26, 27) as follows:

והיה כי יאמרו אליכם בניכם מה העבדה הזאת לכם : ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים ואת בתינו הציל : שמות ב' כו' כז' :

"And it shall come to pass, that when your children shall say to you, What is this service unto you? you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the passover unto the Lord, who passed over the houses of

the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, but our houses he spared."

Our text requires but little explanation so far as its words are concerned; it merely commands, that in order to remember and to call to the minds of others the miracles wrought at our going forth from Egypt, we should perpetually keep certain remarkable ceremonies, which should induce our children to inquire, "What is this service unto you?" when the answer is to follow from those grown old in the spirit of Judaism, by expounding to those yet young in their experience of divine things, the motives of gratitude which should attach all sons of Israel to the service of their Benefactor, because of the many benefits which He bestowed on them in times and seasons when evil and death overwhelmed those who had oppressed them. This is the whole which the text we have quoted teaches; and, to this day, the remnant of Israel observe the ordinance, in so far as they are enabled through the destruction of the temple; and, if the "sacrifice of the passover unto the Lord" is not placed upon the tables of the rejoicing pilgrims, at the place chosen to let his glory dwell there, we assemble around the festive board, and, with unleavened bread and bitte rherbs before us, recount what the Lord has done in the far-away days of antiquity, when He plagued our adversaries who would not obey his will, and took us out from slavery, a nation from the midst of another nation, with signs and wonders, and an outstretched arm, and fearful deeds, even as we experienced in Egypt before our own eyes, where we ourselves were the recipients of the divine bounty,

where we ourselves witnessed the transactions written down in our sacred records, which we, therefore, in our own persons, are of right bound to acknowledge.

Thus far the letter of the law; but what says the spirit thereof? It says, that we Israelites have been more favoured than any other people, and hence we have more duties to observe towards our Father. Other nations, no less than ourselves, have been slaves to others; but never in the history of the world were they rescued at once and forever from the power of their tyrants, whilst these were rebuked and humbled as it were in a moment of time; other nations, too, like ourselves, have walked in ignorance of divine things; but never in the history of the world was it witnessed, as in our own case, that the glorious majesty of the Lord should be displayed before their outward vision, and a sound should reach their outward hearing, to teach them truths and precepts before unknown. Where so much has been done, some return is surely requisite to prove ourselves worthy, in a slight degree, of the favours undeservedly bestowed; and how shall we requite services to Him who is so exalted, so immeasurably great? Can we do aught to render Him greater? can we in the least contribute to increase his happiness? He is not subject to our actions; He is removed from the sphere of our influence: whilst we exist because He has created us; whilst we breathe because his breath is in our nostrils. And shall we then say *how* WE will be grateful?—shall WE determine *what* we will do to requite Him for all his care, his mindfulness of our sorrows, his beneficence in times of plenty, his bounty

when famine devastated the earth? Shall it be by erecting temples in every land? by leading to altars in every town herds of oxen and flocks of sheep? shall sweet incense curl upward from domestic altars in every house? shall thousands of instruments be attuned in full accord? shall millions of voices shout forth his praise in harmonious melody? shall we devote our life to contemplation, our years to constant thought upon what He is, upon the deeds He has done? Or are there other methods by which men have endeavoured to render themselves worthy of the good providence of the Lord, by becoming better and purer through outward acts than their fellows? No doubt, those who have thought and acted thus, did it from pure motives; they imagined there was something in the human mind able to teach it how to make itself worthy of divine goodness; but, who that has intellect does not see that, with all just mentioned, we have not yet reached the point of conferring any benefit on God? Our temples may indeed grace every land; but have we magnified thereby the being of our Creator? Altars may smoke with uncounted sacrifices; but have these appeased his hunger? Incense may ascend from every domicil; but has the odour pleased Him that sits enthroned above the heights of the universe? Let choristers and those skilled on the harp and sweet-sounding cymbals join their harmony—let all that have voice in one grand chorus sing without ceasing, will they then have exalted the glorious Governor of all existence? Let the wise and intelligent withdraw from the walks of men; let them immure themselves to spend their days in solitary contemplation; but have they in this wise added

aught to the beatitude of our Father who is in heaven? It were folly to maintain that either of the above, or all of them combined, had effected or could effect the least towards reaching the proposed end: men would still be men on earth, whilst God would still be God in heaven, whether sacrifices be offered or left unslaughtered grazing on the pasture; whether harps be attuned to chaunt his praise, or their chords remain untouched by the hands of those skilled in sound. How then shall we serve our God? how then shall we show that we are grateful? how prove that the goodness which we have received, and which is daily renewed from the Hand which is ever open, whence plenty descends, forever and aye, into the lap of those who never deserved it by their own merit, has not been unworthily bestowed? Truly the heart desires to return thanks, the spirit longs to requite some of the mercy and the truth which have been bestowed; but the solution of the question is not within the bounds of human reason; for all conclusions of mere human research would necessarily end in vexation and a troubled spirit. Yet we have received the means of solving it, and it is found in the words of the Scriptures which have been given to us for our guide and instruction. They speak of God as our Benefactor, as the One without whom our existence is as naught, without whose will our days would be vanity and but a shadow on the earth; but they likewise inform us that He has given us the means of rendering ourselves worthy of his favour; that we can, if we will, earn from his mercy all the good we desire on this earth, all the happiness we can expect to enjoy hereafter.

Yet not alone the means, but the manner of making them productive has been likewise revealed: in other words, we have received direct precepts, which are the emanations of the divine Mind, and which are represented to us as the acts which will be pleasing to God. Whatever then is done in conformity to these divine injunctions, is the very thing which betokens gratitude towards the Lord in him that does it; and no matter what those who merely argue from human reasoning may allege, it is a means of deserving yet farther the favour of our heavenly Sovereign. We, perhaps, must admit, if we come to take the subject in its importance in or influence on human life, that to eat unleavened bread on the Passover is nowise particularly meritorious; there is nothing in the act itself, which can render it one of peculiar dignity in the eyes of a philosophical inquirer; but it assumes a very different aspect when you search the Scriptures and see the ordinance: "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread;" for herewith is expressed the will of God, that those who belong to the house of Israel shall absolutely and in reality eat, for the space of an entire week, bread which has not become leavened, and with which no leaven has been mixed in the smallest proportion. If, therefore, we abstain from that which is prohibited, and use what has been ordained, we admit at once that we yield up our own will and pleasure, and adopt in their stead, for our government, the expressed commandment of our Creator; we confess the insufficiency of our intellect, and become obedient servants to what He has decreed; we give up our right to self-government, where we are certified that our God has taught us something different from what we

ourselves would have chosen, and act, therefore, not as we would have acted, but as we are certified that it is his desire we should demean ourselves. Were it, that our reason had any substantive power,—that our knowledge were the result of our own reflection, —then might it be alleged that such obedience is that which a bondman has to yield to his master; not because he wishes it, but because fear or interest compels him to forego his own will. But the case here is far different; of ourselves, we know little indeed; our own wisdom is limited, like our days, to the shortest span; and He who teaches us his law is our God, who existed before we were born, who will be after this changeful world shall have lapsed again into chaos, if that be his ultimate will; who sees the connexion of thing with thing, till the utmost end of all that is or will be; to whom little acts done by us are necessarily of equal importance with the greatest, because to Him all our deeds are alike. If then we obey Him in what He has written down for our instruction, we are like children who follow their father on a road which is new to them, but which he has often trodden before, of which he knows the beginning and the termination, the dangers of which are familiar to him, but the beauties also of which he knows equally well. The child will accompany his father into the open field, will enter with him into the depths of the forest, and into the fastness of the mountain-path, not because he knows them himself, but because he believes that his father has knowledge, that he will not deceive him, and that, should there be danger, he will stand by and give him all the aid in his power. Even so are we taught to trust our

Father in heaven upon the perilous journey of life; there is an open field, here a dark forest frowns in the distance; there is a craggy mountain-peak which we must surmount, here is a pleasant meadow which invitingly stretches out at our feet. But for our whole journey it is the same guide whom we are bid to follow,—it is the law which has been given to us,—it is the wisdom of everlasting, which has been planted in our midst,—it is the voice of God, which every where greets us with its friendly sound, in youth and in age, amidst pleasures and amidst sorrows, in prosperity and in distress: and shall we hesitate?—shall we halt because we would not act after this manner, had we ourselves made our religion? What know we?—what are we? Ask the philosopher in the day of his triumph, and he will tell you that his soul feels dark, that he is ashamed at the smallness of his knowledge, and the unsatisfactory state of his acquirements; and question the most experienced physician what he knows of life,—its origin, its progress, its termination?—what are the operations of the mind, the causes of its decay, the reasons of its recovering new vigour? and when you have learned all that can be ascertained, and seen all that ever has met the human eye, you will turn away sick at heart at what men call human wisdom and human power, and gladly will you seek shelter from the uncertainties and vacillation of our own research to the evident knowledge which beams for you, be you great or small, from the pages of the word of God. For from their perusal you will rise refreshed in your search, satisfied in your painful investigation; and if not all has been made clear to your comprehension, you will have learned at least

that what you cannot comprehend is safe in the custody of the Creator, and that He will direct every thing, yea, the very evil which you have to endure, so that it may at the last redound to the good of all, the entire creation, of which you are but a small part at the best, if even you yourselves deem that you are of paramount importance.

Gratitude, therefore, for the benefits we have received, can be shown only in obedience to the revealed will of God; we are not to inquire whether our reason would have sanctioned such a law or not; for submission to the instruction of the Supreme is the test, whether we are truly alive to the importance of regarding Him as all in all, his will as the only light for our feet. Are we then not to erect places of worship? are we not to sing hymns to God's praise? are we not to contemplate his greatness? Ay, even so, if these acts merely spring from human vanity, from a satisfying of our natural wants, to do something to express our gratitude. Places of worship should, however, be erected, not to display how we can serve the Lord, but because He has consecrated our so doing by his positive command, and has promised to come and bless us wherever we are assembled in his name. We should sing praises to the holy Being, not to please the ear, not to make the worship attractive, to draw the unwilling to the house of God, that they may be delighted and charmed with our psalmody, but because "it is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High." We should indeed contemplate the miraculous works of the Lord, and recount the mighty wonders which He has displayed; not, however, in the solitude of the cloister,

or in the hermit's cell in the desert, but in the midst of the walks of life, in the populous city, in the crowded market-place, amidst the labourers when engaged in their daily toil, in the society of the reapers, when the richly blessed harvest falls beneath the strokes of their sickles. Wherever we turn our eyes, there they are met by evidences of surpassing Goodness; wherever, therefore, our lot is cast, there too should we feel sensibly our indebtedness for the bounty, our entire dependence on the Hand that sustains us, not because we deserve mercy, but because the world is governed by the Spirit of compassion and forbearance, who pardons when there is guilt, and who blesses though punishment has been incurred. Yes, worship in deeds, in words, and in thoughts, is becoming to man, since he is the creature of God, and, moreover, and this is the chief part of its meritoriousness, because we have been commanded and instructed to feel reverence of the Adorable and Fearful Name, the Lord our God, and because our fathers, who were inspired by God, set us the example of offering up to Him the meditations of their hearts, expressed in the words of their lips. For thus Abraham prayed; thus Moses sang an undying song on the shore of the sea; thus did David attune his harp and chaunted praises, which yet are heard in our assemblies, which will never perish whilst there lives one child of Israel to be animated by the fire which erst burnt in the soul of the son of Jessê. And just as our prayers and our hymns are acceptable when offered in the spirit of humility, because we feel that we owe every thing to God, so were formerly sacrifices and incense acceptable in the place chosen for

his residence by the Lord himself, that is, because they were brought in obedience to the mandate of Scripture. The people in their folly imagined that the more places for sacrifice they had, the more acceptable would they render themselves to the Deity; whereas they were reproved for doing what the Lord had not asked of them; there should be but one temple and but one altar, as there was and is but one God to whom adoration is due. Hence the very acts which were worship at Jerusalem became iniquity and transgression in the places not sanctified by the spirit of our Father; and the few times that in the degeneracy of our state pious rulers governed the land, as was the case with King Josiah, these abominations of provincial places of sacrifice were removed from the land. All this proves what we have set out with, that acts of worship must have the sanction of the Supreme to render them agreeable to God; human reason cannot establish a standard of acceptability; hence we are bound to yield to the instruction which alone can enlighten us, if we wish to exhibit in good truth the grateful feeling which fills our soul.

How should we then act? we, I mean, who belong to the house of Israel? we, who reside in this country, in the new home where we can and do live secure from the attack and malice of the adversary of our faith? Is it by erecting synagogues merely, and ornamenting them, and having an attractive worship? Is it that we please the ear and gratify our senses whilst present in the house of prayer? It is indeed true that it would show a poor devotional spirit, were we to have fine houses for our dwellings, and have them ornamented and furnished with every thing that

can please and delight, whilst the house of God should be a mean hovel, and not rendered pleasant and agreeable to the eye; since by such neglect we would be like the miser, denounced by the prophet, who brings from his flock the meanest for a sacrifice. So also is it requisite that the worship be conducted harmoniously and decently; that the chaunt be well regulated, and the reading of the law and prayers be done with due devotion and solemnity; that silence and propriety be observed whilst we are within the precincts of the sacred walls; because, if before a human king, we would necessarily feel awe and respect, how much more should this be the case before the supreme Ruler of the world. But, observe well, brethren, that if we have accomplished all this; if we have beautiful houses of worship, and every thing regulated in them, so as to give impressiveness and decorum to our public assemblies, we have not discharged our debt of gratitude to our Father. He has given us freedom; it is not, therefore, the synagogue alone where He is to be honoured; it would be but a poor commentary upon our pious feelings and devotion, were they to be limited to the synagogue solely. The whole life of an Israelite ought to be one constant series of worship, not indeed of that species which consists in the recitation of prayers and psalms, in the pouring forth of beautiful words from burning lips, but of that order of which we spoke in the beginning, the surrendering of our will to the religion revealed to us from heaven. But look, how we actually do act! One would be led to suppose that the atmosphere of freedom were incompatible with the Jewish religion; that only under the pressure of circumstances could Judaism strike

root in the heart of its followers! Shame, that gentiles should make the discovery that the Sabbath is profaned extensively, that many who have been properly educated by their parents even, distinguish not between the clean and the unclean! Shame, I say, that those who watch for an opportunity to strike a fatal blow against those who are of Israel, by robbing them of their faith, should thus see, or fancy that they see, that they have at length found out the true remedy of destroying Israel from being a people, that by giving them freedom they would soon learn to dispense with the faith which they clung to in adversity, like the traveller that parted with his cloak amidst the assaults of the rays of the sun, which he only wrapped the closer round him when the fury of the storm burst upon him with its chilling blast. Are you prepared to have this remark verified by your own example? My voice, indeed, cannot penetrate very far; but let me beg of all of you who now hear me, and do carry the message to all with whom you have the least influence, to do all in your power to prevent the verification of the hopes of our enemies, and the fears of the servants of the Lord. There is no connexion between freedom and irreligion; the true spirit of godliness can only thrive where no fear of man does weigh down upon the soul. God reigns supreme where the power of mortals is not felt crushing the spirit, which ought to be left as free as it came from his creative hand. Why then should we not prove by our whole course, that freedom only quickens the plant of faith which is rooted imperishably in our hearts? What is there uncongenial with the brightest enlightenment and our religion? Let

science triumph in her achievements and not-yet-thought-of discoveries, Judaism will never lay fetters on her limbs, or make her gainsay the truths she has elicited; let refinement spread over hill and valley, and let war and strife be banished forever from the earth, what has our religion to fear? It is its own triumph which it beholds; it is the goal which we hope to reach through its blessed influence. Only let us be firm, let us not forget our Benefactor, when we have met with enlargement; let us be unlike Pharaoh, who forgot his obligations to God and man so soon as the plague had relaxed of its severity. Yes, what is the use of all our synagogues, of all our order and decorum, if the worshippers are away, because they are pursuing their own avocations on the day sacred to the Lord of hosts? why should He accept such service when his laws are contemned? And then this takes place in a country where none can molest us, because of our faith; where we can rest or labour without any one to question us, why we do so. It is, I acknowledge, a happy presage, that the observers of the Sabbath are increasing, that more respect has in many places been paid of late to the days set apart by the Lord as holy; but there is much room for improvement yet; all have not been brought in, and many of the ordinances are not as strictly observed as they could easily be. Let me beg of you to arouse yourselves to one mighty effort for the good cause of the Lord; He has dealt bountifully with you; the labour of your hands has prospered; your stores have increased, and good success seems to have attended your undertaking. Devote then a portion of your time, a portion of your wealth, to the service of

our common Father; be righteous yourselves, and contribute the means to bring others to his footstool, to rescue the poor and uneducated, so that they may not fall a prey to the destroyers who are ever anxious to seize upon every stray sheep from our flock, to bear it away to a den worse than that of a lion, to an apostacy from the God of Israel. Yes, you have the means, then aid in spreading a knowledge of our religion among the members of our household; and thus will you best prove your gratitude by purifying yourselves according to the spirit of the law, and in drawing others by the bonds of love to follow your pious example. In this wise can you also best celebrate the festival of our redemption from bondage, and with sincere hearts can you assemble round your table all your household, and recount to them what God has done for your fathers when coming out of Egypt, and return thanks to Him for the mercy which He ever displayed towards the sons of Abraham, his beloved.

And may his grace yet farther protect and bless us, now and forever. Amen.

Nissan 14th. } 5606.
April 10th. }

DISCOURSE XIX.

GENTILE CUSTOMS.

THOU, O GOD! art exalted and holy, and with Thee is the fulness of light: whilst we are accounted as the dust of the earth, impure in our desires and surrounded with doubt and darkness in the midst of our best acquired knowledge. How then shall we presume to question thy decrees which we see executed by thy agents in all the stages of our existence? why shall we doubt thy goodness, because we are for the moment afflicted? But the heart, though conscious of its weakness, is not the less rebellious; it does not at once acquiesce in thy ways; and not until we have been accustomed to obedience, do we feel thy goodness in all thy dispensations. O! be Thou then our guide in our journey through life; let us be made wise in the knowledge of thy ways, so that in prosperity we may thank Thee ever with a grateful spirit for the good Thou hast dispensed, and, when the clouds of darkness gather around our path, we may call on Thee to give us light, and to submit to thy will with a perfect resignation which can adore Thee in the midst of tribulations. In this wise will the beauty of thy religion be practically displayed, and those who worship not yet with a perfect will, may be induced to come and learn of thy servants how to enjoy the goods of this life, and how to suffer the ills to which all are exposed, and to be ready to remain

true to Thee, the One who is all in all, the Creator, Governor, and Saviour of the world, Thou who wast and who art, and who wilt be alone and forever, God the Eternal, the Redeemer of Israel. Amen.

Brethren!

In the struggle which we Israelites are compelled to wage with the world, not the least untoward circumstance, to take the matter in the way mankind judge, is the smallness of our numbers when compared with the followers of other persuasions, and this disproportion is the more apparent from the fact of our being scattered in small communities in the most populous cities, so that in but few places can our presence be at all sensibly felt. If we look at the assemblies which weekly flock into the houses of worship of other sects; if we see on their stated festivals the hand of industry arrested, and one solemn scene of repose overspreading the land: it almost appears presumption in us to stand aloof from the masses, and to maintain our separate little orbit in which we have been accustomed to move. But if we quit the contemplation of the crowds before us, and examine minutely in their divisions, there at least where mind is left unshackled and permitted to adopt such deductions as to it seem the most reasonable: we will be astonished at the diversity which exists amidst the outwardly-apparent conformity of conduct. It is true, all sects agree in condemning as erroneous the ideas of faith which we Jews profess: still if you question them closely, they will all allege to have a high veneration for our religion in its purity, and for the ancient bearers of the testimony to the truth and good-

ness of the Lord. Go where you will, amidst all followers of the Nazarene and Mahomed, and probably, too, among many idolaters, they will profess their belief in the truth of the books of Moses; they will unanimously tell you, that therein are contained the only authentic records of the deeds which God did to man in the early ages of the world. If then you feel, in spirit, the weakness of Israel in the smallness of the household of Jacob, revert back to the origin of the Mosaic institution, how it came into existence amidst the desert of Arabia, far from the boundaries of civilization, how it had to struggle during the long period of forty years, which consumed the remainder of the life of Moses, from the Exodus from Egypt till his death, in inuring the people under his guidance to the restraints of the precepts of the law, and how it has since worked itself upward to become, though in a circumscribed degree, the governing principle of all civilized nations. Among the tens of thousands of his followers Moses perhaps alone appreciated the object of the redemption he was to bring about: it was that the people should serve God in rites and upon principles differing from their enlightened rulers; whereas they, when hearing that God had visited them and seen their affliction, listened only to the clanking of their chains, and felt the pressure of the yoke on their necks; and they thus looked only forward to the long-coveted hour, when they might extend their steps and hold out their arms freed from the bonds of slavery as far as the natural length of their limbs would permit them; they hoped to lift up high their heads, no longer pressed down by unwilling burdens. Yet to have accomplished all this

would have been merely to show mercy to the few, the comparatively few, I mean, who composed that generation of our forefathers in Egypt; and liberating them from oppressive labour indeed, but leaving them sunk in the same depth of ignorance in which they were at that moment, would have been to make them a savage horde freed from restraint, and dangerous from the very hardships they had been compelled to endure, both to their own rulers and those people in whose neighbourhoods they might happen to be. But immediately upon the announcement that the hour of their freedom was impending, they received a commandment to be observed throughout their generations in memory of their having been liberated, not by their own prowess, but by the special interposition of a beneficent Providence, and that they were, it is true, rescued from servitude to human beings like themselves, but only to become servants to the One on high; and upon this condition did they receive the permission to quit the soil of their sorrows. "And go, serve ye the Lord, as ye have spoken," were the words of their tyrant, and with the sound of the wailing of their enemies yet ringing in their ears, they hastened onward to meet their destiny, and upon the shores of the Arabian gulf they chaunted their song of deliverance from the ruthless foe, who desired either to reduce them again to slavery or to wreak his vengeance, and to satisfy the craving edge of his sword by their slaughtered thousands. Yet the prophet was nearly alone; a few had in truth been brought to see the aim of the Lord; but the multitudes soon murmured about the absence of the flesh-pots of Egypt; where, though bondmen, they had

bread enough to still the base cravings of their physical hunger. Again the mercy of God was manifested to them: their hunger was appeased, and their thirst was quenched; Amalek's host was smitten by hands unused to wield the sword; and they were at the same time informed of an institution peculiar to them which, in addition to the formerly-given memorial, they should observe forever.

Yes, the Passover had been instituted to commemorate through all their generations the great deed of redemption, to be observed *once a year;* as the liberation of the people from bondage was to be final, and not to happen again during their whole existence; and thus whatever trials have come to our lot, *servitude* to men was not one of them. The Sabbath, however, was ordained as a *weekly* festival, constantly recurring, in order to remind continually all who observe it, that the God for whose glory they feel themselves bound to abstain from labour, watches over every individual during his *whole* existence, and graciously bestows his blessing on the work of his hands; for without *his* favour all toiling would be in vain, and no plan of aggrandizement can succeed if *He* grants not success. They were thus gradually made to understand that their liberation from Pharaoh's yoke was not to be limited in its effect to their own period, to terminate with the life of those who had participated immediately in its benefits; but that it was an event so constituted and interwoven with their national existence, that it should be permanently felt by all their descendants. Still, with the bestowal of these two precepts, the Passover and Sabbath, the impression of God's power was not yet sufficiently

riveted to their hearts, to be able for all times to withstand the danger of being obliterated; since the doctrines which were to serve as the basis for their obedience had not yet been promulgated abroad, and intrusted to their keeping as their national opinions concerning God and their relation to Him.

It was, therefore, that the whole people had to be indoctrinated permanently with ideas which should be of an unvarying nature, and which should naturally demand the observance of the institutions already imparted to them as memorials of the great acts of their divine Benefactor. It was, then, not the prophet Moses alone, as in the first moments of the new revelation, not the few high spirits, as afterwards, who understood the councils of God, but millions of human beings, an entire people though the smallest of all nations, who learnt to comprehend the will of the Lord, and became willing recipients of the standard of faith or belief which was intrusted to their keeping. Behold then our fathers at the foot of Sinai, listening in silence and awe to the fearful Voice that spoke amidst the thunder, and louder and more penetrating than the sound of the cornet, which grew stronger and stronger every moment in that terrific hour, and view them as every instant their soul became more and more opened to the reception of the instruction afforded them: and you will be able in a slight degree to comprehend the immense accession of power acquired by the views which only a little while before were known to but one of all the children of man. There were now hosts of witnesses, masses of standard-bearers, parents of innumerable families that were to spring from them, who all should ac-

knowledge the same doctrine, that God the Lord is one, who all should follow that same law which had been proclaimed from amidst the fires of Horeb.

But, though the foundation had thus been laid, the work of salvation was not finished. Before the newly-elected servants of the Most High could possess the inheritance which had been promised to them; before they could again be allowed to hold intercourse with those not instructed as they had been: they had to undergo many trials, and be schooled in various ways to discover "whether they loved the Lord with all their heart and all their soul." The love of Egyptian customs was to be obliterated from their mind, equally with the feeling of inferiority which a long subjection to arbitrary rule had naturally engendered in their souls. It was to be expected that persons, who had always been compelled to take the direction of their ideas and the prompting to their actions from the commands of others, should eventually imagine that their superiors were actually above them in every thing as much as in political power; and though, therefore, the chains had been removed from the limbs of the Israelites, nothing else could be looked for, except that the impression thereof should be felt a long time thereafter; and that hence upon the first opportunity they would revert to the customs which had been theirs by long practice from their infancy. Need I cite in evidence the worship of the golden calf? the murmuring of the people on the occasion of the false report brought by the spies, where in the first case they assumed again the gods of Egypt, and in the second actually conspired to return to the country where renewed servitude was the only lot which

they could hope for? Let us therefore admire the wisdom of the Lord who, foreseeing the evil which a long-indulged habit would constantly reproduce, if not eradicated by the lapse of time, absolutely kept the Israelites in the wilderness, under their great teacher, during a whole generation,—so long as by their conduct they had proved that they still clung to the idols of Egypt, whilst their limbs felt the pressure and their souls the degradation, the result of their involuntary residence in a land that was not theirs. It must not be forgotten that, though God permits evil to be done, it is not his purpose that the rule of violence and sin shall endure forever; and hence, though He did not destroy all the idols that ever were erected, nor did restrain mankind by any active interference, other than a wholesome instruction vouchsafed from time to time, from following the bad passions and follies to which they yield themselves captives: it was consonant with his wisdom to establish a system which, through its antagonizing effects to the customs of Egypt, was ultimately to obtain a complete triumph over whatever evil was entailed upon the world by the practices and ideas, which had sprung up, like poisonous plants, amidst the noxious culture of the priests of idolatry. It was not, therefore, a mere arbitrary decree intended to make the Israelites a singular people, but a wise precautionary statute, which was announced to us, after our tabernacle had been reared, in the following words: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God;" and then continues:

כמעשה ארץ מצרים אשר ישבתם בה לא תעשו
וכמעשה ארץ כנען אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לא
תעשו ובחקתיהם לא תלכו : את משפטי תעשו ואת
חקתי תשמרו ללכת בהם אני ה׳ אלהיכם :
ויקרא י״ח ג׳ ד׳ :

"According to the deeds of the land of Egypt wherein ye have dwelt ye shall not do; and according to the deeds of the land of Canaan, whither I will bring you, you shall not do, nor walk in their statutes. My ordinances shall ye do, and my statutes shall ye observe to walk therein; I am the LORD your God." Lev. xviii. 3, 4.

Let us understand well that, with the existence of idolatry in Egypt and Canaan, as now in many heathen lands, there prevailed the most barbarous and demoralizing practices, and even murder was permitted, nay enjoined, to gratify the infamous customs of heathenish priests. In looking over, therefore, the prohibitions which follow in the same chapter from which we have just quoted, we will find the one relating to Molech-worship included, a worship which was best observed by men causing their children to pass through blazing fire, whilst the deafening noise of drums and other loud-sounding instruments drowned the cries of the innocents in the ears of their agonized parents. Such horrors were practised, and similar ones are now practised, in the insulted name of religion. The mind was held captive by the false representations of those who professed to appease the wrath of the gods by their so-called sacred practices, and the multitude, not daring to question the will of those who crushed in their mind

all aspirations for holy things, succumbed blindly, perhaps willingly, to the incubus which was resting upon them with its iron, deadening weight. But could such things be permitted in a system where God was the King of the land? could it be imagined that his servants, whom He had redeemed, should be the voluntary bondmen of teachers of falsehood, of crime and of cruelty? It were blasphemy to say this, to imagine it even; and hence it was proper that, whilst the least tendency to a general apostacy was prevailing among the Israelites, whilst the masses had not yet learned enough of truth to prefer standing alone in the world to following the idolaters, they should not be permitted to be where the newly acquired religion could be weakened of its force, where the examples of others could at all interfere with the instruction of truth and light then revealed to them. The wandering, therefore, in the wilderness for forty years was, it is admitted, a punishment for disobedience; but at the same time it was like all evils of mankind, in the providence of God, directed for the ultimate happiness of Israel, and through them of the world at large. Perhaps you and I, brethren, do not see this clearly; but we see sufficient to demonstrate that, had we been suffered to enter Canaan, and to mingle in friendly intercourse with the inhabitants in the persons of the original idolaters who went forth from Egypt, the Mosaic system of religion could not have been firmly established by any means with which we are acquainted, especially if their teacher should have been taken from the walks of life at the age usually allotted to man. But now mark the difference: the rebellious spirit of "the

generation of the desert" had proved that they were not entire with the Lord, and they were, therefore, doomed to perish in the wilderness; whereas their children were educated in the path of duty under the inspection of the prophet and his priestly brother,—the two who, from the beginning of the promulgation of the joyful message of redemption up to the time of its accomplishment by the partial conquest of the land of Bashan and Gilead, had never been separated in their good exertions for the people, save that once only, when Aaron made the calf for them upon their wild clamours. Thus then Israel by degrees learned to dispense with a love for Egypt's idols; the fear of its taskmasters had never had any hold upon the minds of their children, and perhaps a bitter feeling of indignation had been gradually implanted in them by the recital of the horrors which their parents occasionally made in their presence; and it was therefore to be expected, that with them there would be found sufficient devotion to the cause of the faith which had, so to say, become their birthright, that they would be able to withstand the seduction of the customs of the Canaanitish nations, whom they had been ordered to exterminate for the greatness of their crimes.

From time to time, however, Ephraim loved his idols, and Judah followed not rarely upon the path of evil, and both were lured away by the attraction of the freedom of paganism. They refused to be so singular as to be in open contradiction to the opinions and actions of the vast majority of mankind, and they deviated to such a degree that at length the prophet reproved them with the fearful denunciation, "The number of thy gods hath been that of thy cities, O,

Judah!" But the folly of this course of conduct was speedily made manifest to them; the gods they had chosen, instead of the Lord whom Abraham had proclaimed, could not rise up and save them; they had become followers of vanity, and other followers of vanity came and expelled them out of their land, and scattered them as seed is carried off by the wind in all directions, until the earth is every where trod by the solitary son of Israel in his weary pilgrimage to find rest for the soles of his aching feet. And now has the truth been rendered less valuable because we have once forsaken it? or are the habits of the gentiles more friendly to the preservation of its treasures than when all but we were worshippers of idols? Neither is the case. The truth is yet precisely the same unchangeable emanation of God it was from the beginning; as He has not, cannot, change, so is the word which He has established for a thousand generations unchanged and unchangeable. The very new dress, and the constantly changing phases which error has ever had to assume, and the constantly varying inducements it holds out to us to join ourselves to its followers, prove how infinitely superior our faith, taught as it is in the same words in which it was by our blessed Moses, standing as it does upon the same principles upon which God himself placed it, must be to all other doctrines and practices claiming each in its turn to be the only road to salvation. And as regards the comparative safety to us from the more humane, mild forms of the religions of modern gentiles, they would nevertheless soon destroy our national existence, if we could be base enough to exchange our stay, our hope in God, for such things as our oppo-

nents offer us for our acceptance. If we were justly commanded not to follow the statutes of Egypt and Canaan, because they were, among other reasons, adverse to the truth, irrespective of their gross immorality: no one acquainted with the facts can deny that following the statutes of the nations of our day would lead to the same result, and withdraw us slowly, but by sure degrees, from the truth and the law as made known to our fathers on Mount Sinai. It is not necessary to-day to go into a long examination of the truth of our position; it is too evident to require proof; every one of you can supply enough of reasons from his own reflections, and he must then come to the conclusion that only by obeying the law and upholding its tenets can he, as a reasonable being, fulfil his duty to his God, though by thus thinking and acting he places himself, in common with other Israelites, the few and oppressed, in contradiction to the large and triumphant mass of mankind.

Let no one, however, imagine that there is any arrogance or bigotry in thus stating our adherence to our religion; for if we did not believe that it alone is the truth, and that we are bound to adhere to it under all circumstances: how much might we then not improve our worldly condition by abandoning it altogether. But may that thought be ever far from our soul. For it is indeed the standard of the Lord which we are bearing; we are indeed proclaiming by our presence on earth, and by our refusing to mingle with the rest of the world, that we unwaveringly believe in the creed of our forefathers; and let us hope, that the sincerity of our conviction will at length make a profound impression on mankind at large,

even if the time of convincing them altogether of their error be yet far distant. Yes, should this desired period be even long delayed, how powerful may not be the influence which we can and do exert around us! Our religion has before this been invoked to chase away gross errors; our law, and our prophets, and our Psalms have been borrowed to scatter the light of truth abroad over the earth: and may not then our mode of interpreting Scripture ultimately be copied likewise, and lead to results the importance of which we can scarcely yet imagine? Those who study the course of events see nothing improbable in this view, and those who confide in God, confidently expect this in the fulfilment of his word. In the mean time let us, each and all, be firm in the path of our duty, obey our religion in all its requirements, fear not the ridicule of the stranger, or the Israelite who forsakes his God, and let us pray to our Father to shower his protection over us all, and especially shield with his might those of our brothers on whom rests heavily the yoke of tyranny. May this be his will. Amen.

Iyar 12th. } 5606.
May 8th. }

DISCOURSE XX.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PENTECOST.

O God! who knowest all that passes within thy world, from whom none of our deeds is hidden, let us pray Thee to strengthen us in thy knowledge, and cause us to be guided by thy fear; so that we may never trespass against thy will, though no human eye be directed unto us or our doings. Yea, let us be made conscious that Thou, Father! art ever present, ever watchful and cognizant of our acts, ever ready to visit with retribution our backsliding, but also ever ready to approve of all the good we do, and to hallow by thy blessing whatever is undertaken in the furtherance of the glory of thy kingdom, and the prosperity of mankind, those whom Thou didst create in thy image, in thy divine likeness. Full often, however, does our mind wander after the things that are not good, and we are allured after the imaginings of our heart, and the unhallowed desires of our eyes. Let us, therefore, pray Thee to implant deeply within us the perception of the beauties of thy religion, that we may at once crush the tempter when he rises up in rebellion against thy will, and to overcome successfully the opportunities to sin which our heedlessness so often seeks in the vain fancy, that we of ourselves are able to overcome iniquity and to pursue what is good. But it is Thou only who givest us light, it is thy law only which can guide us securely: let us then

feel the truth and force of thy revelation, that we may follow Thee in all Thou biddest us to do, and that we may feel our entire dependence on thy blessing and instruction, as did our fathers when they stood affrighted at thy glory on the day of the gathering at Horeb, when Thou camest to institute them as thy people, and to teach them thy wisdom and knowledge. Amen.

Brethren!

After the ten commandments had been proclaimed in the hearing of the whole people of Israel, they started back from the presence of the great glory that blazed on Sinai, and they stood afar off. It was then that the prophet assured them of their safety; for that only to prove their innermost soul, and to render them permanent servants of the Lord had He come, in order that his fear might be upon their faces, so that they might not sin. And in conformity with this assurance on the part of the prophet, did God himself address through him the people, as follows:

אתם ראיתם כי מן השמים דברתי עמכם : לא
תעשון אתי אלהי כסף ואלהי זהב לא תעשו לכם :
שמות כ' יט' כ' :

"You yourselves have seen that from heaven I have spoken with you. You shall not make [aught] with me; gods of silver and gods of gold you shall not make unto yourselves." Exod. xx. 19, 20.

The divine Majesty had displayed a part of his glory, had proved to mortals that there are pleasures other than those arising from carnal enjoyments; and

had made them experience delights and knowledge differing from any thing before attained by them; and all this was done that they might be convinced that it was the Creator who spoke audibly to their ears, that it was not a mortal being who had made himself heard in their presence. For there were more than two millions, consisting of men, women, and children, descendants of Jacob and the sons of the stranger, who had united themselves to the covenant of God; and still all heard the same words, as all saw the same fire, in the same moment and with one accord, in a manner utterly unattainable were the speaker one like themselves, were the sounds merely the effect of mortal organization. Yea, the fire blazed, and the earth quaked, the mountain shook, and the trumpet was exceedingly loud; every thing was overpowering, crushing with its unheard-of force; and still there arose above the din and roar of the elements, despite of the terror which each one felt for his safety, a clear and distinct voice, which spoke in words ample and clear, "I am the Lord thy God:" no son of man whose power is limited, no one born of woman who is destined to die; but the everlasting One who was from the beginning, before the hills were conceived and before the mountains were brought forth, who is now in the same strength, vigour, and intellect, powerful alone among all that is fleeting, intelligent alone among all that is subject to infirmity and decay, and who will ever be, yea, when this earth shall have worn out in its revolutions in its prescribed orbit, when the stars shall have become dimmed and shorn of their lustre; when nature herself shall have served the purpose of her formation; yea, He who

even then, and forever thereafter, will be the same which He is now, one, alone, great, wise, good, and indivisible. This the people heard, and they felt that no one but the Eternal could thus address them all, could thus remove the veil from every eye, and light up an imperishable fire in their souls; and they stood ready to lend a willing ear to the other precepts which the Most High might prescribe for their guidance. Now observe, brethren, the great distinctness and force of the first commandment, which enjoins on us to believe in the existence of the Godhead. There is no laboured definition attempted to say how the Holy One is constituted; it even describes him not as endowed with any of the attributes which are so eminently his own, which so peculiarly render Him the object of our adoration; but we are simply referred to the miracles and power which He had displayed unto ourselves. "I am the Lord thy God who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." We had been taught by the display of the mercy and greatness of God in Egypt, that He was not only superior to the vanities which our oppressors adored, but that He was unfettered by the powers implanted in the organization of outward matter, which we call, for distinction's sake, "the laws of nature;" and therefore we are merely exhorted to accept as God the One whom our own convictions had forced us to acknowledge as our Deliverer; as Moses also said in his song, "This is my God, and I will glorify Him; the God of my father, and I will extol Him." Yea, the announcement from Sinai was only a response to the previous conviction of every Israelitish heart; and thus it struck a chord which

still vibrates in unison with the current of our life, as the descendants of those ransomed of the Lord, who listened to his voice which gushed forth in awful sublimity from the cloud-capped pinnacle of the sacred Horeb. But observe how utterly at variance with the presumed plurality of the godhead, which so many believe to exist, are the words of the Decalogue. The very first word is "I am," Hebrew אנכי; there is no conceivable construction which can transform it into any idea but a single, individual, sole speaker; the same indeed who before that day, when sending Moses on his mission of redemption, had declared himself to be "I will be the one who I will be;" and "thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I WILL BE has sent me unto you." אהיה שלחני אלכם And why "I will be?" Because at every moment of conceivable time it will be correct to say of God that He will yet be, that there will be no end to his existence, no change in his essence. For were it at all possible that He could cease to be, the appellation "I will be" would not apply to him at the moment. Whereas, He himself told Moses, "This is my name forever, and this my memorial from generation to generation." And were it possible that there could be any change in his existence, that He could be endowed with a power at any future period which He did not possess at the beginning, his memorial, or the manner of invoking Him by his adorers, would necessarily change. But how did Moses and the saints of ancient days invoke Him? how was his memorial borne aloft on their pure, inspired lips? Even as the God Eternal, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; and how constituted? as the Adonay Echad, the Eternal,

who alone is ONE; as the same, and by the same appellation which He had applied to himself in the multitude of visions with which He blessed his early servants. Farther, we are told: "I am the Lord thy God, *I*, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Again here is the singular number applied; but one Eternal revealed himself to Abraham, the same and but the one who then spoke on Sinai; and it was but He alone who spoke of our fathers, "Israel is my son, my first born;" and it was therefore but He alone who effected our redemption. Where, we ask, is the possibility of imagining that a combination in the personality of the Godhead is thought of? where the possibility to fix on a single expression which would render it compatible with the sacred text that a delegation of power was in contemplation, and a change in the saving mercy of God in the range of possibility? Understand well, brethren, that the Bible must be taken as a whole, one entire system of revelation; you cannot wrench one passage from its connexion, and say, "It teaches this particular doctrine," when this is in contradiction with other passages; and though there may be some colour of reason for your new discovery at a first sight, depend upon it that you have misconceived, in your eagerness for new things, the spirit, if not the palpable meaning of the text. If, now, you weigh well the few passages just quoted, without going any farther into the long list which can easily be added, they will clearly demonstrate that, as far as the book of Exodus is concerned, it teaches precisely what we find in the book of Genesis, and that the ideas of Adam, Noah, and our own immediate fathers, were precisely the same

with those which Moses received in his revelation. This much we can insist upon as uncontrovertibly true, that no one will discover any contradiction in the announcement to Abraham, "I am El Shadday, walk before me and be perfect," and the first precept of the Decalogue, "I am the Lord thy God:" nor between the promise to Jacob, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac," and the one given to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It is only by impressing in early childhood the mind with views essentially differing from ours, that one can be brought to acquiesce in their correctness; and when this has been done, there will be no difficulty in finding means to reconcile the most emphatic expressions of Scripture with views altogether different from what they ostensibly say. Hence should any one bring up, in his advocacy of foreign principles, reasons professedly drawn from the Bible, you should not be surprised at the startling boldness with which error endeavours to uphold itself; but meet him calmly and dispassionately, with the words which declare that the Lord changes not, that He is as He always was and ever will be, the Lord ONE, the God who created the world, the God who chose Abraham as his servant; the same God who spoke to us on Sinai, in his own majesty, without mediator or messenger; and the same God, at last, who, in his own time, will redeem the world from error, and cause his Name to be invoked by all mankind, even as He now is by the sons of Jacob, who have for his glory so long borne the contumely of the world, the hatred of the ungodly.

Let us once more revert to the ideas of the Patriarchs on the subject the dearest to them, to the propagation of which their lives were devoted; I mean their love for their faith: and how do we find them appealing to the Deity? Evidently in a direct manner, asking of Him the grace and favour which He alone could bestow. Abraham entreated Him to distinguish between the guilty and innocent at the threatened destruction of the cities of the plain, and also invoked the Lord when he petitioned for favour towards his son Ishmael. In sending out Eleazer to obtain a wife for his son, he speaks of the God before whom he had walked, and expresses his belief that He would send his angel before him, and enable him to accomplish his mission. Isaac, when he blessed his son, also speaks directly: "And may the God Shadday bless thee." Jacob only knew the God of his father, and in his name he exhorts his children to obedience, and on Him did he rely for aid in the day of his distress. Let any one show to us in all the passages referring to these favourites of God, that they know any thing of a mediatorial power; that they had any conception of a combination of personages to whom worship is due: and it will then be time enough to discuss whether or not there is a misconception of the terms employed. But as far as known to me, there is not a single phrase in any translation of the Hebrew, much less in the original text itself, which can be tortured into such an assumption; on the contrary, the constant use of the same word, the uniform allusion to the greatness and power of the same eternal sole God, ever reappearing when we could expect it to be mentioned; all absence of

mention of an intermediate agent between God and man, whose merits alone, as is alleged, can reconcile us to Heaven, must be enough to convince Israelites, at least, that the view under question is anti-Jewish no more than anti-Scriptural, and, what is the same, contrary to the truth as revealed to us from our heavenly Father. He has made himself known to us by the mouth of many prophets, as the holy ONE of Israel and his Redeemer; as such He was ever invoked among our assemblies; and, if we at all understand the mission of the sons of Jacob, it is their vocation to uphold this great idea of the plenary power of one Creator and Redeemer, as a beacon to the other nations, that they may ultimately come and seek shelter under the same overshadowing wings of Providence, under which we have found protection, from our first institution as a people until this very hour; and with his blessing we will still continue to bear aloft the banner of our hope, inscribed with the motto of the dying Hebrew, ה' אחד, and in every stage of life, amid storm or sunshine, we will acknowledge none but Him, and invoke alone his name, and bow only to the great and adorable Being who alone stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth.

Let us now revert to our text: "You yourselves have seen that from heaven I have spoken with you." Whatever doubts may have accompanied your witnessing the work of your redemption, whatever fear there may have remained that you were deceived, perhaps, by the occurrence of mere striking coincidences, without their being the especial work of Providence, must now yield to the force of conviction

which the public proclamation of the law has had on your understanding. Human agency could not have reached you all at one time; and yet it is but a moment, as it were, since you came to the foot of Sinai; the day on which you had assembled has not yet waned, and behold, everlasting truths have been everlastingly fixed in your very being as Israelites. Other nations are so by the possession of one common country, or one protecting government. But you are rendered one, through the instrumentality of what you have heard; and be this mission then forever yours, to know me only, your God, in whatever place you may be, in whatever position you may be found; and in whatever place I may permit you to mention my name, there I will come, and there I will bless you. But you must never presume to associate any thing or being in my glory; you have not felt any helping hand in Egypt save my own; therefore you shall not ask favour and protection from any one besides me, since there is no inherent power in any creature, and all existing things are so by my will; I alone know the secrets of the heart, to me alone are revealed the thoughts of all my creatures; do not therefore come to me by means of foreign aid, but at once appeal for protection to my bounty, since this alone is all-sufficient for the whole mass of creatures, from the highest to the lowest. The truth which you have learnt this day is to abide with you forever; this day you have as a people heard the voice of the Almighty directly speaking to your ears; the evidence of this is in your possession; your eyes saw, your ears heard; never before was such mercy vouchsafed to any people; heed not therefore any overtures which others, professing to

speak in my name, may address to you; naught but a similar manifestation can gainsay what has been revealed before you; and as I change not, so be you true and faithful, unwavering and firm to the truth which cannot be changed. Do not even represent the unseen Deity by any arbitrary figure which you may imagine to represent Him to your outward senses; there is no possibility of picturing the ideal greatness of the One who pervades all with his spirit; no precious metal can hallow the unrighteous design, no skill of the sculptor can sanctify the daring rebellion against your King.

This in brief is the explanation which the connexion between the verses of our text seems naturally to require; it bases the acknowledgment of the Deity as the sole Sovereign upon what the people had themselves seen and heard; no other argument is appealed to, no other reason is assigned for the faith demanded of them. If, then, we are asked, in our intercourse with the world, to forsake what we have so long guarded, and to join ourselves to the masses who profess to understand the words of the Scripture better than we their first recipients: we will answer, that we have been placed as sentinels over the watch-tower of religion, with the double-edged sword of revealed truth in our hands, our quiver filled by the arrows of wisdom, which are drawn from the law. We have been placed upon this custody to time without end, till the day that the Master of our life himself shall come and absolve us from our duty. This He has never yet done; and day follows on day, and year on year, and still we discover the same Goodness which guided the world in the beginning; and though the

fires of Sinai are now quenched, and its thunders stilled, the effect which they witnessed, the proclamation of the word is still with us in that holy law which is treasured up in yonder ark. We have only ever known one God and one revelation. For the sake of acknowledging the one, and following the other, the waters of tribulation have often passed over our heads, and nations have leagued together to tear us from our adherence to our sacred trust. But hitherto all their efforts have been in vain, and we assemble as yet at this distant day in many a town, and many a land, to worship the Lord God of Israel, in the manner in which He himself was pleased to appoint for us; and the truth, though often assailed, has never yet wanted true and undaunted defenders. Let us then instruct our children, and those who are not firm in their devotion to the Lord, to love Him beyond all, and to swear unwavering fealty to the religion which He has proclaimed. There is yet no other god but He; there has arisen no saviour who can shield us from his wrath; He has acquired no attribute which was not his from the beginning: and hence we can admit of no articles of faith which we did not receive when the law was given from Sinai; whilst at the same time we are bound to adhere to all the precepts which we find it in our power to accomplish, and to abstain from whatever the will of our Father has interdicted to us. It matters not whether the deviation be gross idolatry or erroneous ideas of the nature of the Godhead; for we are enjoined against two things, "To make nothing as God besides the Holy One, nor to represent Him under images of silver and gold." Hence should the seduction come under whatever

guise it may, we are equally bound to reject it, and to abide true, in singleness of faith and unshaken hope, to that standard of excellence which was unfurled before our fathers from the summit of Horeb, and which we have borne as the token of our allegiance ever since, though often sinning against the wisdom which was imparted to us as our heritage. And let us entreat our Father that He will vouchsafe to render us quick in the knowledge of his word, and make us worthy to receive his renewed favour, when his servant, the son of David, shall again raise the divine banner as the signal of our freedom from earthly bondage, and our perpetual adherence to the kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

Sivan 4th. } 5606.
May 29th. }

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE BEST VIRTUE.

Father and King! listen to our prayer! Thou! to whom ascends the cry of all the living; Source of truth! be our guide, as Thou hast ever guided all in whom dwells the spirit which has sprung from Thee. Give strength to our good resolves, and purify our heart from the wickedness of earthly desires, that it may glory alone in knowing Thee, and be a worthy habitation, through humility and faith, for thy own majesty, as Thou hast taught us that Thou,

who art the highest, dwellest nevertheless with the humble and contrite of spirit. And let us, therefore, also entreat Thee to have regard to the lowly state of thy people Israel, and protect them ever from the machinations of the proud when these rise up against them. So that though few in number, and the lowliest of the nations of the earth, they may be sustained through thy overshadowing mercy in the path which Thou hast assigned unto them, and be enabled to fulfil the mission for which they are destined by Thee, to lead all the world to a knowledge of thy will, even at that time of which it is said by thy prophets, that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Amen.

Brethren!

In the Mishnach, second chapter of the tractate *Aboth*, we read that Rabbi Yochanan, son of Zakkay, had five scholars, who were among the most celebrated Israelites of their day. He propounded to them the question, "Which is the right way in which a man is to persevere?" to which he received the following answers: from Rabbi Eleazar, son of Hyrcanos, "Contentment;" from Rabbi Joshua, "A good friend;" from Rabbi José, "A good neighbour;" from Rabbi Simeon, "Careful insight into the event before commencing;" from Rabbi Elazar, son of Arach, "A good heart." To which their teacher then replied:

רואה אני את דברי אלעזר בן ערך מדבריכם שבכלל דבריו דבריכם:

"I prefer the words of Elazar, son of Arach, to yours; for in his words are all yours comprised."

How often has many a youth stood at the entrance of busy life with the important question swelling high in his soul, "Which is the way that I shall choose?" Before him on the one side he sees hastening along, in the pursuit of pleasure, many a gay chariot filled with well-clad children of fortune, with laughing eyes and careless hearts, having only to fill up the passing hour by mirthful recreations, with no care, no thought for the morrow. And he asks, "Shall I strive to be like them?" Or he turns away into the busy haunts of commerce, and beholds the plodding merchant counting over his gains and devising schemes for farther aggrandizement; he sees many dependents coming to ask the aid or the sage business-advice of the successful trafficker, and perceives them listening with apparent eager earnestness to the words which drop from his lips; and he inquires of himself, "Shall I, too, embark in commerce, achieve myself heaps of wealth and stores of precious things, that I, too, may challenge the homage of all who approach me when I am old?" Or he enters into the halls of learning, and behold! before him are marshalled youths from many towns, and even different lands, to drink in the streams of wisdom which flow from the almost inspired sage who has spent his days in observation and his nights in painful search, that he might discover the mysteries of science and the intricacies of history; and he is fired by the sublime spectacle that one feeble old man should be able to enchain in breathless silence those whose blood rushes tumultuously through youthful veins, who are eager for the chase of life; and he questions himself, "Would I not do right to scale in my turn the accliv-

ities of knowledge and art, that I, too, may be honoured, when my hair becomes bleached by the frost of old age?" Or he is attracted by the sound of martial music, and beholds mounted on a spirited, gay charger, a man of noble bearing, dressed up in the golden trappings of a military commander, greeted as he passes by the acclamation of thousands, hailed as the victor in a bloody fight when the enemy cowered before his prowess, and followed by the multitude of soldiers who were led on their war steeds to the murderous charge inspired by his presence, or stood up boldly in closely serried lines to receive the shock of the deadly conflict from advancing foemen; and the youth feels giddy at the height which the daring bravery of the successful soldier has attained, and he asks himself, "Shall I, too, buckle on the sword of the mighty, and hasten thither where danger calls and glory awaits me?"—And thus he weens that it is in the pursuit of pleasure, of wealth, of science, of military renown, or some other vanity of life, that the true business of existence is concentrated, and he seizes on the one for which he has naturally the strongest inclination, or for which the training he has received from his parents has best fitted him, and he hastens after the phantom with eager eyes, with untiring steps, and he is allured from point to point, from place to place, till, when all his desires are attained, he sinks down exhausted from his fatigue, and wonders that no satisfaction, no stilling of the craving for happiness has resulted from the success which has attended him; whereas in truth he has been chasing after shadows, that appear indeed large and beautiful at the distance, but which fade into thin air when you

have once reached their place; and he turns away disgusted with life, weary of the burden of existence. But it is natural to conclude that there are pursuits within our reach, or at least one road which we may follow, where this weariness will not be the sole reward of our toil, or else human life would be a dreary waste, with no shelter from the storms of adversity which accompany us from the cradle to the grave. Well was it, therefore, that the wise teacher in Israel propounded to his scholars the serious inquiry: "Go and see which is the right way in which a man should persevere?" They knew at once that the man who had never sought the pleasures which men call enjoyment, nor those distinctions which are called greatness, did not mean to direct their attention to pleasure, wealth, worldly wisdom, or renown, but to the best interests of life, the pursuit of righteousness; and they, though differing in their replies, all aimed at the same end. The first thought that the great end of happiness would be best gained by contentment with our lot, and by not looking with envy upon the happiness of others, which quality of the mind is expressed by the Hebrew phrase, עין טובה—"a good eye." Another one believed that to be always sure of being able to persevere in the path marked out by God, we should seek for our friends only among the good, who would naturally confirm us in virtuous resolves, and never lead us through their persuasion upon the ways of sin and transgression. Another again thought that no matter how many good friends we have, if we are surrounded on all sides by evil-doers, whose example is always before us, we may gradually be drawn to regard iniquity with indiffer-

ence, and seek the companionship of the ungodly, so soon as we have ceased to look upon them with aversion and on their deeds with abhorrence; wherefore we pray in our daily devotions: "And deliver us from—a bad man, from evil imagination, from an evil associate, from an evil neighbour," so that we may not be led by the advice or example of others to forsake the dictates of the divine religion.—Another one of the Rabbi's scholars was of the opinion that a careful investigation of the probable result of actions is a happy means of preserving us from evil; for let any one endowed with sound judgment look upon the results which spring from crime and irreligion in others, and he cannot help being struck with the conviction that naught but sorrow to the sinner himself, and trouble to those who surround him, can result from a forsaking of the line of strict duty which religion demands of her votaries. There can be no question that all the recommendations of these four are eminently calculated to cause a man to persevere in virtue and piety, and to render him a faithful servant of his God,—contentment with what has been bestowed on us from the Bounty which feeds all, will cause us to rejoice over the success of our neighbour, and will enable us to aid cheerfully the necessitous in their distress. The choice of good companions will invigorate us in our pious course of life, and induce us to incite ourselves and others by a mutually exerted influence to love what is good and to pursue righteousness. And when we have a careful guard on our actions, and watch well what may be the probable consequences of our doings or omissions, we will no doubt often pause before we permit ourselves to

be misled by the apparently good, which is nevertheless the actual evil in its tendency.—But the last of those who resolved in their minds the problem of a happy life, thought he discovered the solution not so much in outward circumstances, in influences acting from without upon the spirit within, as in the improvement of the source of sensibilities and the feelings which he imagined can only act beneficially, if it bear in good truth within itself all the antagonizing energies which can combat successfully against the evils, or rather the evil tendencies which are so plentifully scattered through life. He therefore answered, "The best means for the attainment of a pious and happy life is a good heart." Let us see a moment what this aphorism includes. By the term *heart* we generally understand the power of will and desire which is inherent in man, by which, though attracted to any object from its capacity of pleasing him at first sight, he is enabled nevertheless to forego its acquisition by the control he has over himself, without any outward compulsion being exerted upon him to prevent his choice, or to direct it into another channel. A good heart then would mean a disposition to forego the commission of what religion terms evil, and to love the practice of what is demanded of us as our duty, and not merely a kindliness of feeling, which is commonly called good nature, and arises very often more from an indolence of temper than from any absolute love of what is really virtuous and holy.

The Rabbi thought that this was the true essence of the duties of life, and preferred it to the other means proposed, as it, according to him, embraced all the others. If we now come to investigate the

motives which govern us in our actions, in illustration of the correctness of Rabbi Yochanan's judgment, we cannot help being struck with the singular combination of causes which not unfrequently prompt us. We imagine not rarely that we act honestly and uprightly from pure love of righteousness and justice. But let us look a little deeper into our heart, and we must be startled that it was vanity, love of praise, perhaps the wicked motive of shaming others whom we hate by exhibiting our superior excellence, which impelled us to be active in the commission of a virtuous deed or the bestowal of benefits on others. There may be a smile of approbation playing around artful lips, whilst the inner man feels disapprobation and contempt; there may be outwardly a decent conformity to the wishes of others, whilst the heart abhors what the hands perform. Now the question is, "Can this be virtue? will it stand the test of temptation? will it be the same when the public gaze is withdrawn, when we are alone in the presence of our Father in heaven, when the approbation of those whom we desire to please is not likely to be obtained?" Evidently virtue of this kind is but a mockery of the name, it is hollow, insincere, fleeting as thought itself, varying in its exhibition as the temper of those with whom we are associated. Still the word of God is uniform, it prescribes one rule under all circumstances of life, and teaches us that wherever we are the eye of the Lord surveys all our actions. How then shall we train ourselves, in order that this knowledge may have its full weight in prompting our deeds? Even by schooling daily our will and our desires; by exalting the one, by strength-

ening it through reflection and a careful study of what God has written for our instruction, and by forming the others so that they may be quick in perceiving when indulgence would offend against the strict line of observance, and when it is either harmless or useful. This training must, of right, commence with early infancy, when the impressions are yet few, when the soul has not yet been poisoned by the unholy influences which are continually at work around us. It is then that we should ceaselessly study the legacy of divine wisdom which is treasured up in the Bible; investigate what the indulgence of any feeling or desire will lead to; and then resolve to eradicate from ourselves all those aspirations which we have been taught and which we have discovered will lead us unto transgression. Let us instance a common failing, obstinacy, which has its origin in an overweening esteem of our own powers, and the light value which we put upon the judgment, rights, and knowledge of others. This foible, when indulged in for a length of time, will induce us to persevere in any resolution we have once taken, let the consequences be what they may; it is enough for us that we have resolved; an offence has been committed against ourselves, and we will not unite any more with those who have done this injury to our self-love; and let justice go unheeded, let public welfare remain neglected, let ever so much mischief be done by our standing aloof, what care we? we preserve our character for consistency, we have succeeded in making our weight felt, and our opponents, they who have injured us, are the cause of the mischief that is done by our obstinate perseverance in a line of conduct

which we condemn within our own soul—not we! Suppose, however, that we commence betimes placing a well-founded distrust in our own opinion, that we learn truly that we are liable to form, in the moment of excitement, certain opinions and resolves which are wrong in principle and injurious in their tendency, that the best way of refuting an unfounded prejudice prevailing against us is by showing that we do not deserve it: and how readily will we forego our own ill-will when it comes in conflict with our line of duty. It may be that, with all our striving to forget the injury, we cannot think well of those who have done the wrong: still this will not prevent us, as in reason and religion it ought not, from uniting with them in carrying out what is good and beneficial in itself, even if they lead, and we be only humble coöperators.

So, also, teaches Solomon (Prov. iv. 23), "Keep the greatest watchfulness over thy heart; for out of it are the issues of life;" meaning that we should be careful how we imagine our feelings to be correct, and how necessary a constant watching becomes, lest we be deceived in ourselves, and give way to sentiments the end of which is corruption. Just as "life and death are in the power of the tongue" according to the opinion of the wisest of men, so does he here insist, that in order to obtain life, as the issue of our course of conduct, we must have as the basis a correct and unprejudiced knowledge of our feelings, and the deviation from right to which, if they are indulged in, we should of necessity be led. If then we see that our desires are in conflict with the will of God, that our habitual inclinations are tending towards

sin, we should endeavour to remove as far as possible the approaches of transgression, and to introduce in their stead the proper incentives to piety. For instance, if we observe that we are inclined to selfishness, to an indulgence in revenge and hatred to the prejudice of our neighbours: we should set about in sober earnestness to correct the evil by dwelling with peculiar care upon the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Surely selfishness, revenge, and hatred, with all their odious train, are in direct conflict with this paramount duty; hence they must be removed, in order that the kingdom of God may be established in us through our love for our fellow-beings. If we experience that we are covetous, that the success of others gives us pain, their sorrows on the contrary afford us an unhallowed pleasure: we cannot consistently with our obligation to the ten commandments and other portions of Scripture continue in such delinquency, although as yet no overt act has given outward evidence of the wickedness within. The spring of life is obstructed by unhallowed sentiments, and it needs must be cleansed, before the Lord can dwell within us.—If we in the moment of our success feel ourselves unduly elated, if we ascribe the victory to our own strength of arm and the innate power of our own intellect: we may be sure that the stream of our thoughts runs impure, that there is rebellion lurking within us against the supreme King of our existence, and that we cannot be his, until we have rendered our soul by a thorough purification a fit tabernacle for his majesty.

But when we have acquired this faculty of feeling that we are bound so to regulate our ideas of things

as the law points out to us, we shall then have the best remedy against sin; we shall have contentment with our lot, love the society of the good, shun the contact with the wicked except it be for their improvement, and carefully avoid every act the consequence of which can be in the least injurious to the peace of our spirit. The man of a good heart, in brief, whose will and whose desires are bounded in everything by the limits of God's word, will cheerfully be obedient, though in so doing he have constantly to triumph over some portion of his inclinations, which as he is of the earth daily draw him to the earth. But let it not be imagined that there can be any intermission, any period of our life when we can stop with thus improving our sentiment; or that we of ourselves have strength enough to perfect the work of God. Neither is the case. If it requires constant practice to reach any measurable perfection in the arts, and when this escapes again from us if we do not constantly repeat to ourselves the lessons we have acquired; if in ordinary transactions of life we require a teacher by whose aid we can best overcome the difficulty with which self-education is surrounded: how much more must all this be the case in the attainment of the art of life which to solve is our only problem on earth. It may then safely be assumed, that though we have overcome selfishness and pride to-day, they will have to be combatted again to-morrow, perhaps not with the same labour as at first, but still with some exertion at all events; and nevertheless there are occasions when the subsequent struggles against the power of evil is greater than the first, at those times I mean when temptation and op-

portunity appeal with redoubled weight for gratification to the heart, which is always human, though well fortified by religious knowledge and an habitual deference to the will of Heaven. In the same manner would it be impossible for us to subdue ourselves, if we did not cast our hopes on our Father and look to Him for aid in the purification which we may have commenced. Self-sufficiency is the very opposite of piety; no one who knows the plague of his heart will say that he has any inherent power for real good; it is his business to make the beginning, to feel that he is sinful; but when this commencement has been made, he ought to cast himself entirely on the unbought mercy of God to aid him in his contest for righteousness, which is so necessary for his salvation. And if we commence and progress in this seeking for salvation, the labour will become daily of easier accomplishment; one by one the impurities will be cast forth; one by one the sacred impulses will occupy their place; and as we lose day by day some of the youthful vigour of our frame, the virtues which ought to grace us as servants of God will increase in intensity and become more numerous and beautiful, until our dying bed will be surrounded by that glory which alone is the portion of the righteous who have done the will of their Father. The heart is then truly well guarded, its possessor being conscious of his weakness, whilst the Author of our being is constantly invoked to give it strength, and his revelation unceasingly looked to to impart sanctity to its promptings, by seizing only on those acts which are for the glorification of God and the peace and benefit of man.

But as each individual is endowed with sentiments,

with fallible desires, and also with the remedy which will make him whole before the Lord: it is evidently the part of every man to set about this purification by himself. He is not to wait till others give him the signal to commence; he is not to reform merely because others have told him "it is time;" but he is bound to rouse himself from the mortal moral stupor which is the effect of an unregenerated heart. What is it to him that others transgress? this does not absolve him; on the contrary, he is for himself, and as an individual accountable for all his deeds; nay, for his evil sentiments which he might have destroyed, if it had not been for a sinful indolence of character. And if the contest for the acquisition of the desired road to happiness be greater, because that superadded to our own inclinations we had to struggle against the influence of example and outward temptation: the reward for a successful resistance to sin will be the greater, and the approbation of our Father the surer of being extended to us in recompense for the little we can at best do to requite Him for all the benefits heaped on us by his bounty. And who knows, what the effect of the reform of one man, of one woman may be? In our indolence we often think ourselves of less importance than we actually are; but in God's name and with God's blessing a poor man, an humble woman, may be the means of leading others to think, and, in consequence, they may become the means of a revival of a true spirit of godliness. Only let no one be ashamed of the confessed change of his heart; such shame is not humility, it is fear of the scorn of the wicked. Let them scorn thee, penitent brother! Thy God sees thy heart, He will approve

thy work, and bless with life everlasting thy aspirations, and change into imperishable jewels in his crown of glory the tears of repentance which thou weepest for sins committed in the days of thy obduracy.

Mothers! fathers! you who have treasures which are destined for immortality in your hopeful offspring, —watch, O watch over their hearts, and the springs of life which thence issue. Teach them humility, hope, love, faith, and prayer; teach them to look on all mankind as children of the same loving Parent, to whom the rich are dear, and to whom the poor are equally objects of the tenderest affection; teach them to call nothing good which the law of God prohibits; and thus may you hope to see them advance in life with hearts pure, with souls undefiled, to meet you at length at the throne of the Most High as angels of purity, as those whose deeds are accepted, whose sins are forgiven. Amen.

Sivan 18th. } 5606.
June 12th. }

DISCOURSE XXII.

ISRAEL'S WARFARE.

O Thou, who art called in the words of thy messengers the Everlasting One, the God of Israel! we beseech Thee to animate our hearts by thy blessed spirit, which renders man quick in understanding and wise in the true knowledge of the things that pertain to salvation. Let us be deeply impressed with the contemplation of thy greatness, and feel how exalted Thou art, how worthless and helpless all else beside, even those things to which the uninstructed children of the dust render homage and adoration. O Eternal God! be Thou the aid of thy chosen people, the portion selected from the rest of men to testify of thy unity and thy undivided power. Lo! mankind rise up against them in every age, in each generation; they forge counsel to extirpate thy name from their mouth, thy love from their hearts; they desire that we shall mingle with them, and bow down to stocks and stones, and to pray to a god who cannot save. But thou art the Guardian of Israel; behold, thy providence sleepeth not, thy mercy slumbereth not. Let then thy goodness come to our aid, frustrate the device of the cunning, who strive by false reasoning, by specious appeals, by the effects of bribery and corruption to disrupt our unity; and shatter the power of the tyrant who, in his vain reliance on human strength, presumes to uproot what Thou hast planted;

to obliterate what Thou hast written; to pull down what thy own hands have built. Yea, do this because Thou art merciful, and because of the covenant which Thou madest with our fathers, to be unto them a God, and to their children after them. Amen.

BRETHREN!

In the section of the Law which we have read to-day, you will find a full account of the attempt of the king of Moäb to entail a curse upon the people of Israel through the fancied power of the heathen prophet Bileam, whom he sent for from Pethor, which was on the river Euphrates, in order to aid him in the proposed struggle against the nation which had come up from Egypt, and which was then lying in camp on the borders of his kingdom. The messengers of the Moäbite king, as we learn, accordingly repaired to the house of the prophet; but he, not daring to go with them at once before having received the permission of the Most High, who occasionally made himself manifest to this lover of idolaters, though he knew their worship to be vain, requested the ambassadors to remain with him that night, in the hopes of being able to comply in the morning with the desire of their master. But during the night the expected vision revealed to him the will of God, that he should abstain from the contemplated journey, and the Lord told him:

לֹא תֵלֵךְ עִמָּהֶם לֹא תָאֹר אֶת הָעָם כִּי בָרוּךְ הוּא׃
במד׳ כב׳ יב׳׃

"Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for it is blessed." Numbers xxii. 12.

We are in our days often surprised at the apparently marvellous aversion which non-Israelites entertain for our race, and at the concerted action which potentates, statesmen, and the rulers of churches devise to wipe out the name of Jew from the history of the day; the history of the day, I speak advisedly; for from the history of the past it would be, even to their heated imagination, an impossibility; since there it is indelibly stamped, and it belongs confessedly, even according to those who hate us, to the bearers of civilization, and to the first family of men who combatted successfully against the misrule of tyrants on earth, and against the spirit of folly which threatened to submerge all the high aspirations of the soul in the whirlpool of a false conception of the power and nature of the Creative Principle. Yes, our enemies do confess, not because they wish to do so, but because they are reluctantly compelled, that without us, or some other similar agency, which, however, has never existed, they could never have soared above the degradation of heathenism, which prostrates the body before the civil ruler, and the spirit before the priest who vainly pretends to interpret to man the will of beings that do not exist, and have no power to save. Many of us are therefore astonished that in this age, the so-called enlightened nineteenth century, there should be witnessed, despite of the march of intelligence, education, and scientific discovery, such an inveterate hostility to the Jews as such; we do not mean precisely to them as men, but to them as members of a distinct race, glorying avowedly in professing doctrines in many points at variance with those professed by other portions of men. We are so apt

to look upon the present period as something so far removed from all that is illiberal and unreasonable, that we forget that in the next fifty years we may be regarded as belonging to an era far inferior to the one then existing, and that that one will surely be lightly esteemed in the same light by its later successors. Every generation is pure in its own conceit, just as every individual is righteous if he is himself to be the judge. But as in this latter respect we are bound to learn to regard ourselves as others regard us, although we be not able to form so harsh a judgment as others pronounce over us: so also must we as a collective body, as the people of an age, take great heed not to pronounce a panegyric so extravagant over our progress, that a succeeding period may have well-founded reason to laugh at the self-complacent folly of the men of the present time. In brief, we have not to this day made so great a progress ourselves, as to place us beyond the occurrences of former years; and it is to be feared that the progress in the next one or two hundred years will not be so rapid, unless by special intervention of Providence, as to cure the world of that illiberality which, though so great a blot on human reason, still cleaves to us as a garment of which no exertion of ours, it would appear, can divest ourselves. But there are men among us who regard the present era as something so far superior to any which have preceded it, that they express a perfect burst of astonishment at any event which tends to rob their darling age of any of its false laurels. In this century, they imagine, the Jew need not be any longer the Jew of the fourteenth or eighteenth; but he has now, according to these philoso-

phers, a different mission. He has met with liberty, with protection, with the smiles of the governments of the earth; and hence he can safely dispense, so they aver, with much which deeply concerned him in ages gone by, but is now entirely useless. These men of the day do acknowledge that, when the sword of persecution was unsheathed, when every eye looked on us to hate, when every hand was lifted up to smite without mercy, without restraint—yes, that then it was well for the Jews to look forward to a period of redemption, to the coming of a redeemer, who should break for them the yoke which rested heavily on their shoulders, and cause them to live in peace and harmony in their own land. But that now a change has come over the face of our dream; we are no longer hated by the world; we are citizens of the state, equals in the eyes of the law, and we suffer no injury because we believe in a blessed Unity, the sole and alone existing Creator. Hence every land is our Palestine, every city our Jerusalem, every synagogue our temple. Hence it would be uncitizen-like to pray for the restoration of Israel to Palestine; to look forward with a longing eye to the day when the wilderness shall bloom in beauty and fruitfulness, when Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and the son of David shall rule over the assembled faithful; and it would be high treason to the rulers of the different countries in which we live to believe that on the day of the Lord the princes and kings of the earth shall be humbled before his chosen servant, who is to unite all mankind in one pure worship, in one bond of universal fellowship. For men like those just mentioned the name of Israelite is nothing but an abstraction,

that of a professor of certain dogmas, who must, however, have no thought of a separate nationality, of a distinct government, of an especial home; it is enough for him to be a subject of Prussia, a native of France, a denizen of Britain, a citizen of America; he must not aspire to the higher hope of being in himself, or any one of his descendants, a member of the new divine commonwealth, where righteousness is to be the only signal to confer distinction, and fraternal love and mutual justice are the only rules of the state. Hence our modern citizen of the world is astonished that in his days of fancied redemption he is so often met by flat contradictions of his assumed accomplishment of prophecy; that he finds, although he be a member of a legislative assembly in France, a fellow-Israelite is not permitted to wear an ancestral garb in Russia; that while he exercises the functions of a magistrate in the Antilles, those of the same kindred with him are banished for the sake of their faith in Poland and Persia. Every where he meets the rude arm of power extended against Israel; every where he finds that he has still to struggle with the spirit of zealotism and illiberality, yea in the very countries where he is undistinguished by law and privilege from the other inhabitants; every where he is reminded that Israelites and their faith are not the objects of a tender regard on the part of those who believe in other creeds. And why? Simply and because we are yet in captivity, let the so-called liberal vaunt of the superior enlightenment of the age as they please; and there is yet the same necessity for the hope in a brighter future, as when the sword raged furiously in every land, and the name of Jew was universally

the watchword to hatred and persecution. There is no hope for Israel's tranquillity save in their own land, and we cannot expect to avoid annoyance and molestation from zealots under any form of alien governments. Yet whilst we strictly observe the laws of the countries where we reside, and are kind neighbours and peaceful citizens: we are not guilty of treason against the various homes which we have acquired, nor disobedient to the rulers of the earth, by believing that at some future time, be this far away or near, we shall have a commonwealth of our own, of which it was said by Isaiah of old, "And I will set peace as thy authority, and righteousness as thy taskmasters." (lx. 17.) What injury can such a state produce to the rest of the world? None whatever. Behold before you the length and breadth of the land of Israel; no weapon glitters in the watchful sentinel's hands; no frowning cannon opens at you its destructive mouth from the embrasures of the castellated battlement; you behold not magazines heaped up full with the ammunition and accoutrements of warlike array, nor are your steps interrupted by closed barriers or unfriendly gates. Go where you will, blissful peace will smile to greet you; she alone will rule the land, and no one will need to guard himself against his neighbours' wiles or the violence of the robber; because and for the sole reason, that righteousness, the love of God and man, shall be the moving principle, the sole impulse which is to induce the conduct of the citizens of that happy commonwealth. And such a belief you will call treason? such a hope of the future you wish to banish from the hearts of Israelites who have so long looked for the coming of

the day of the Lord? who have borne uncomplainingly all the odium of the ignorant, the insolence of the proud, and the violence of the powerful,—only that they might be true to the God who had called them from the beginning, and who has promised to be with them in the old age of the world, when all changeable things shall have been changed, when all that is perishable shall have vanished into the nothingness to which it was doomed from the origin of things.

The believing Israelite then sees nothing in what passes around him but a continuation of the ancient warfare of error against truth; it was the same in the days of Abraham, nay, before then even, in the sinning of the generations of the flood and of the Babylonian tower. It is not for us to ask, why Providence permits not the good cause to triumph at once? it is his wisdom which suffers this, and enough for us that we are a portion of the power militant which has been appointed to stand as the bulwark of truth on the day of her tribulation. Since now we maintain that we are the depositary of the truth and the covenant of the Lord: what can we legitimately expect, but that in all ages, of whatever degree of enlightenment and scientific development, Israel will be the mark for the shafts of malevolence, which will be shaped according to the power of those who wield them. A Balak during our sojourn in the desert sent for Bileam to destroy us by a curse which he deemed potent for the purpose; an Antiochus forbade the reading of the law, and sacrificed a swine upon the altar; the Romans forbade circumcision so as to take away the initiation of the young Israelite into

the covenant; the fire-worshippers of Persia made it criminal to celebrate the Sabbath by lighting of lamps in our houses on their own festivals in honour of their false worship; the Inquisition endeavoured by the horrors of the dungeon, the rack, and public burning, to purge the world of the leaven of Judaism, to ferret out every one who in the least deviated from the dogmas declared orthodox by the fiat of a fallible mortal; and, not to multiply instances, zealots of our day, and of our own neighbourhood, insult our common sense by banding together, and enlisting apostate Jews in their service, just as did the Syrian of old, to offer us in lieu of our pure and simple faith the discordant and disjointed ideas which they entertain of the salvation of man. All sectarians, as we know, differ widely among themselves; but upon the one point they agree, they dislike the presence of the Hebrews, these are a living contradiction of all their doctrines, and hence they send, as Balak did, to the rebellious Bileam who saw the vision of his Maker, unto those originally of Israel, but who have rebelled against their God, to come and lure away the ignorant, the designing, and the unsuspecting, upon the by-paths of perdition, into the pit wherein fall those who forget their Father in heaven. Look around you, and observe well what is passing; all over the world the same game is now played, only the means being different, which always was exhibited from the day we were made a nation. In one country, say Russia, or Iran, it is the force of the civil authority aided by the power of the sword, which is to compel us to forsake our faith through fear of our life; in another, such

as Prussia, or Austria, or Italy,* it is by depriving us of civil liberty which is freely offered us as a recompense for apostacy; and lastly, in another, such as France, Britain, or America, where the Jew has liberty of conscience through the laws of the land, powerful associations are formed, who endeavour by persuasion, specious reasonings, and the power of money to draw away from our communion those who have not correctly learned the way of the Lord, whose poverty makes them listen to the voice of bribery, or who are not sincere and entire with the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. We have nothing at our command to oppose to all such means, whether they be coercion, bribery, or corruption, but to instil in the minds of our youth, and to enforce the lesson upon the consideration of those mature in years, that Israel has received a mission which is not dependent upon worldly prosperity for its success; that whether we are bondmen or free it is nothing but our religion, the legacy of the Most High, which constitutes our being; that with it we can exist whether we be in the palaces of the Cæsars, in the council halls of the assembled philosophers, or chained prisoners in the wilds of Siberia, or wanderers in the deserts of Africa; but that without it we are nothing but sons of the earth, no longer heritors of a heavenly legacy, outcasts from the favour, the presence of our Father, whose throne are the heavens, and whose footstool is the earth and all that fills it. If all of Israel have this conviction fully at heart, then will the tyrant ex-

* Since this was written, Israelites meet with better treatment in the countries here mentioned.

haust his rage in vain, then will be frustrated the device of the cunning who desire to inveigle away the sons of Abraham from their allegiance to the God of truth. But if, unfortunately, we neglect our sacred trust, if we have no regard to our own conduct, and allow our children to grow up in ignorance of their faith and its duties: then do we open wide the door of the fold to the spoiler, and he will surely enter and bear away many unto the limits of unholiness, and they, who could have averted the evil through holy teaching and pious influence, will be held responsible on the day of judgment for their slothfulness and culpable negligence.

In a word, brethren, it is ours to struggle, to wage a perpetual warfare, not as the gentiles do by invoking the power of civil rulers, not by inducing persons who differ from us to embrace Judaism by the offer of tangible advantages,—but by merely watching carefully over ourselves and those intrusted to our care, that we and they may not be wanting when in his own good time the Lord will come to purify the house of Levi and Israel, as the refiner of silver purifies the precious metal from the dross of impurity. How would we sink into slothfulness, were it that naught but sunshine would illuminate our path; were it that every one differing from us would regard our faith with perfect indifference, careless whether we forsook it or not. But as it is, we constantly see, that to the world at large we are yet the same people that came out of Egypt, and covers the face of all the earth; turn the view whithersoever you will, and you meet the disjointed members of the once powerful kingdom of Israel; there is now no Pisgah, no high land where

idols are worshipped whence the whole extent of our tribes could be surveyed; openly or in secret, in every land where the sun shines, on every sea which is whitened by the sail of commerce, there are worshippers of the God of hosts. Hence we offer a contradiction, powerful though silent, to all the systems of action that have ever been invented, whether they be based on the wisdom of the Greeks, of Confucius, of the Gospel, or the Koran, or of the unbelief of modern philosophers. Each Israelite is a witness of the revelation which has stood for thousands of years, and which will survive yet longer, ay, longer than all else on earth, though few be its followers, though slothful its keepers. We need not then wonder that every device is resorted to in all parts of the world, and in every age, whether it be the past when learning was confined to few, or now when it is widely and far diffused, or hereafter when perhaps all shall be instructed, to diminish the small number of Israelites by inducing those of them who can be frightened, purchased, or persuaded, to coalesce quietly with the masses among whom we live. Nor is it wonderful that there are base traitors who join our opponents, and then, as if out of daring rebellion to their God and an enmity towards his people far above what the gentile feels, go by stealth among professing Israelites whom they suppose accessible to their arts, in order to withdraw these from the community of the faithful. We see only enacted in this age the scenes witnessed in the days of Moses. But the God who said to Bileam, "Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people, for it is blest," will yet farther protect us, and render nugatory all the attempts of

open violence or of secret device, which latter is perhaps more to be dreaded, especially where, as in this country, so many Jews live scattered as single individuals, or households, or a few families at a distance from any intercourse with their own brothers. Perhaps, living as we do at the present time in many countries, on terms of familiarity and kindness with the gentiles, it might be possible that we would by degrees begin to esteem lightly our birthright, and yield it, as many have done, to the smiles of the stranger, by joining ourselves in wedlock to those who would naturally rear up our children as strangers to our religion. But the active opposition which our faith so generally meets with, will naturally rouse our attention, and rivet yet more closely our attachment to this holy legacy, seeing as we do, that so many are anxious to snatch it from us, thus betokening its value and power. Let us then not be dismayed at the conspiracy of nations against Israel; this, too, will like all other tribulations, conduce to our happiness, if only we continue faithful, and never for one moment let go the banner which the Almighty himself delivered to us as the ensign of our salvation. Let the wicked then join our opponents, let the indifferent cleave to the sons and daughters of the stranger: they will meet their reward in the day of retribution which is impending; for to them too that day will come which burns like a furnace, when they like other doers of evil will be consumed like straw; whilst they who have remained unshaken, and adhered to the Lord, will bloom in perennial freshness, like the tree planted by the waters, which fears not when the heat of summer scorches the grass of the field; and the world

will ultimately see that to these, a remnant though they be, the sons of man will be indebted for the preservation of the truth, yea, the possession of that Law which the God of Israel has instituted as his permanent code for the government of his creatures.

And may God in his mercy do unto us as He did aforetime, and change every curse against us into blessing. Amen.

Tamuz 16th. } 5606.
July 20th. }

DISCOURSE XXIII.

PROPHETIC WARNING.

O MOST merciful One! Thou who speakest and fulfillest, woundest and healest, be our protection, as Thou hast been of old, and cause thy people to obtain thy assistance in their sorrow whenever they call on Thee. For lo! our fathers have told us what Thou wroughtest for them in the days that are past, and yet we were rebellious against thy decree, ungrateful for all thy bounties. And behold! the evil which had been foretold overwhelmed us with its force, and broke the pride of our strength, and we have become scattered over the earth, outcasts from our inheritance, as we see unto this day. Yet in the midst of all our sorrows we have not thrown off altogether thy worship; and though we have often sinned, and many evils have come over us, yet have

we not forgotten Thee, nor become false to thy covenant, O God! And Thou, too, hast maintained a watchful eye over our affliction, and we never cried but Thou didst hear; and at the very moment when the adversary laid waste thy sanctuary with fire and instruments of destruction, Thou plantedst the firmer Thy religion in our hearts, so that we went abroad captives to the foeman in our bodies, but more strongly yet captives of hope in thy salvation; and we have stood the shock of the adversities which were decreed over us for our sins, and we have been preserved to follow Thee yet farther in the accomplishment of our destiny. O! save us, then, from our own evil inclinations and the artifices of our opponents, in order that we may be always obedient to thy laws, and be accounted worthy in thy eyes, to deserve beholding the restoration of the service to the sanctuary on Moriah, and the assemblage of the outcasts of Judah in the land of promise under the Messiah, son of David. Amen.

Brethren!

When our forefathers had become ripe for destruction through their shameless disobedience of the laws of God, the impending sorrows were foreshadowed to those great and holy men who under the name of prophets were sent as divine messengers to the people, in order to exhort them to repentance, so that thereby the evil might be averted. But who heeded in those days of degeneracy? The prophets were regarded as wild enthusiasts, who uttered evil forebodings from a blind fanatical zeal, and were not to be viewed by persons of greater intelligence and better regu-

lated judgment. And the evil of the public heedlessness was increased by the fact that the chiefs of the people, those on whom the many relied for advice and example, were the very ones who openly contemned the prophetic warnings by exhibiting in their speech and their acts the amplest testimony that they were enemies to their faith, intent on promoting their own gain, perfectly indifferent whether the means resorted to were in accordance with the national religion or opposed to its letter and spirit. How different was the aspect of public and private affairs in the early days of our prosperity! when individuals greeted each other in the name of the Lord, having their Father in heaven in their hearts, and his praise on their lips; when judges and rulers daily meditated on the law of their God, so that their judgment in matters of controversy and conduct in government might ever tally with equity and justice. But, alas! those days had fled; idolatry had usurped dominion over the spirit, and in consequence forgetfulness of the rights of man characterized those who bore rule in Israel; for with the departure of a submission to the dominion of the heavenly King had also departed the love for his creatures in those who had learned to imitate the customs of the heathens, among whom they who had power looked upon the people as subordinates, over whom they could tyrannize at pleasure. When, therefore, the prophets spoke of repentance, the chiefs refused to adopt a practice which would have lessened their importance; they preferred the world to the word of God, earthly power to a heavenly diadem; and they contemned the message which had come to them from God, and maltreated the messen-

gers who had dared to invade their presence with menaces of coming destruction. The people likewise had become accustomed to the ways of idolatry; they had been taught by their deceivers to suppose prosperity to be the result of propitiating tutelary divinities; and though they became daily more enslaved by their ruthless governors, they refused to see that they could best break the weight of oppression by a sincere observance of the Scripture-precepts, which would not only have reconciled them to their God in spiritual matters, but also raised their appreciation of themselves, and rebuked the shameless injustice of their rulers. But the chiefs would not listen, and the people remained passive in their iniquity; and step by step the commonwealth hastened forward to its downfall, and approached an overthrow from which there could have been no resurrection, if human wisdom alone had directed our destiny. The prophet, therefore, who saw this deplorable consummation gradually developing itself, at a time when much of outward splendour yet remained, when in fact the state seemed to become more consolidated by the victories of its kings over surrounding enemies,—I allude to Isaiah, in whose days so entire an uprooting of Judah appeared an impossibility,—spoke thus in the agony of his spirit:

ונותרה בת ציון כסכה בכרם כמלונה במקשה
כעיר נצורה : לולי ה' צבאות הותיר לנו שריד כמעט
כסדם היינו לעמרה דמינו : ישע' א' ח' ט' :

"And left is the daughter of Zion as a hut in a vineyard, as a lodge in a cucumber-field, as a besieged city. Unless the Lord of

hosts had left us a remnant ever so small, like Sodom should we have been, unto Gomorrah should we be compared" Isaiah i. 8, 9.

Let us just picture to ourselves the image which floated before Isaiah's vision, so that we may comprehend in its full extent the dreadful reverse here announced. He stood probably, when speaking to the people, and this in the days of Uzziah, whose many victories had given new stability to the kingdom, at the entrance of the temple, whilst the crowds of the believers flocked thither to worship; for even in the days of sinning there were many who sought the temple of the Lord, yea the temple of the Lord, as though the public act of worship could operate as a counterbalance to all their transgressions. We then behold the prophet, in the presence of such an assembly, whom his admonitions hitherto had failed to excite to a better and holier course of life; among them he espied no doubt the priest who officiated at the altar; the learned judge who was the arbiter of the fate of the people; the humble artisan whose best pleasure is labour, and whose sweetest music the ringing of the hammer upon the anvil; and likewise the hardy soldier whose scarred visage bore ample testimony that the victory over which his country rejoiced had not been achieved without toil, without the blood of its brave sons shed on the reddened field of slaughter: and these he beheld doomed to exile in the persons of their descendants, though they themselves might be all admitted to a peaceful and honourable sepulchre, because the measure of Judah's iniquity was not yet full. And he stood also in the midst of a magnificent city; the hills of which rose

one above the other, covered with beautiful structures, the residence of refinement and luxury; the gates were strong; the walls which surrounded that city were high and considered almost impregnable; aqueducts of magnificent and costly architecture brought the water from a distance into the dwellings of the happy and secure inhabitants; and then there was above all the temple, far-famed for its elegance, renowned for its costliness, loved and adored as the more immediate residence of their God, as the place selected from all their tribes for the dwelling of their Father's glory. And yet he saw all this vanish as it were into nothingness; he beheld the streets overrun with hostile armies whom neither gates nor walls could shut out; he saw the houses blazing in one frightful conflagration, and he beheld the gilded halls of the temple crushed and crumbling amidst the fierce fire which would seize upon their beautiful proportions; and he witnessed the vain agony and mute despair of the people in their helpless efforts to save their state and their temple from ruin. Can we imagine a greater contrast between the then present and the future? The reality was all greatness; the probability was, that what was then existing would stand unchanged and untouched for ages; the people themselves were confident in their strength, thoughtless in their acts, because secure in the prosperity of their commonwealth. How much like a wild enthusiast must have appeared in the eyes of the whole audience the man who predicted the evil? Must he not have been regarded as one afraid of shadows which would never become substantialities by fulfilment?—And still he stood unmoved by the perhaps

wild gestures and menaces of the crowd, by their murmuring over this apparent treason to the state; for he knew that the foundations of our kingdom were not strengthened by righteousness, and that its pillars were not upheld by obedience to the divine will. The peace, he therefore felt convinced, was deceptive; the glory was but mocking the eye; and whilst all seemed to be firm and established, the rotten fabric was hastening to decay, to a revulsion than which the world has never known any more thorough and mournful. Judah was to his mind's eye driven from her home, and the streets of Zion were deserted of their inhabitants. Just as one builds a hut of the frail materials which the vine offer to guard the products of the vineyard during the time of the ripening of the fruit, only to desert it when the chill season of winter renders this care no longer necessary; or as one puts up a temporary box in a vegetable-field merely to watch it from thieves during a few short nights in the season of gathering the cucumbers, only to leave it speedily to decay: just so was Israel's glory, the city of Zion, to be rendered desolate and forsaken, a monument through its ruins, scarcely discernible in their decay for what purpose they were originally intended, that such a town had once been, though now no longer in existence. Or like a besieged city from which no one goes forth, into which none enters, which in silence awaits the assault of the besiegers, forsaken by false friends who hasten not to its relief: just so should the remnant of Jerusalem's inhabitants be, cut off from the sympathy of mankind, exiled from their home, not allowed even to mourn over their fallen fortunes near the ruins of their sanctuary. And

yet, if one had admitted at that time that the entire destruction then predicted would actually take place, he might still have imagined that it would be merely a temporary defeat, from which the people could recover by the gaining of a battle, or by a treaty with the enemy however disadvantageous. But even this dream of returning prosperity, through human efforts, was taken from the people by the emphatic declaration, that only through the mercy of the Lord a small remnant should escape; for otherwise and excluding this the destruction should be as complete as that of the cities of the plain, the very site of which is now usurped by the sluggish waters of the Dead Sea, the sombreness of which is enlivened by hardly a bird that seeks its desert shores.

Ay, in the days of Isaiah all this appeared the reverse of probable, and four generations passed away during his prolonged lifetime, and Jerusalem was twice saved from the attacks of its enemies, and so far as fulfilment was concerned, the retribution seemed as distant as ever. The prophet completed his earthly pilgrimage, and the walls of Zion stood yet unmoved, and the morning-sun touched with golden light day by day the glorious pinnacles of the sacred edifice on Moriah. But did the vengeance sleep? did almighty Justice slumber? Had this been so, then would we not be exiles from our fatherland, then would not lamentations rise every year in the places of our dispersion, over our fallen greatness, over the destruction of all which we called sacred and dear. Read the history of any nation that ever existed, and see whether greater sorrows became the lot of any one, than befell us; tell us of any which passed through

severer tribulations than did the people of Israel. And all, not because our counsellors were not wise, not because our institutions were not calculated to effect the greatest good of the greatest numbers; not because our sons were not brave and poured out their blood like water on the day of the battle; for if all these could have saved our state, it would have stood unshaken, and glorying in its strength and wisdom. But it was because the instruction of our heavenly Legislator found no response in our hearts; we chose and elected what we would keep; called reasonable what pleased our fancy; but discarded those ordinances which imposed restrictions on our passions, and cavilled against the wisdom of those laws which our own weak reason was not able fully to comprehend. And because we desired to be equally free from moral restraint with the heathen; and because we had foolishly imbibed the idea that we could propitiate the Deity, who is one and alone, by associating with Him things which have no existence, as though He needed the aid of any created being in his government of the world: the sword was allowed dominion over our people and our country; and barbarians, who knew not the throb of mercy, and who revered nothing though ever so sacred, ever so beautiful, came and swept over our land with the besom of destruction, till all had fallen which the prophetic warnings had doomed to fall, till all had perished, whose death had been decreed by an all-wise Judge. And the remainder, the handful that had escaped, they who appeared, in comparison to their former greatness, like the forsaken hut in the vineyard, wandered away from their native soil, driven thence by the vio-

lence of their captors, or self-exiled by the fear of their new rulers, into the plains of Babylon and Egypt, and by the banks of the Euphrates or the deep stream of the Nile they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion; and they were humbled when they reflected that through their transgression, and because they would not believe in the messengers who urged them to repentance whilst foretelling the evil, they were rendered a second time strangers in a land not theirs, and that henceforth they would have to bear the contumely of the enemies of their race, and those who believed not in the faith they had inherited from their fathers. Their soul therefore disdained to feel joy in their captive state; the very songs of praise that erst resounded in the halls of Zion became strangers to their lips, their harps gave not forth an exhilarating sound; but in plaintive melodies the poets and priests of Palestine mourned over the burning which the Lord had burnt, and they wept in silence over the youth of Israel who had fallen on the day of the wrath of their God, as an atonement for ages of unforgiven sin.

A new life was thus inspired in our people; they who had refused to be faithful in prosperity, clung with the love of desperation to the memory of the greatness that had passed away for a period reaching far, far down in the dim recesses of a future not yet attained in our own day; for the restoration under Zerubbabel was at best but a partial one, and during the whole period of the second temple we were under the tutelage of foreign powers, with but a short and tempestuous interruption under the sway of the Maccabees. The fulfilment of the threatened evils which

had at one time not found believers, now brought an overwhelming conviction to the hearts of the masses of Jacob's sons, that only in obedience to the divine law can there be safety for them, and that, no matter how long the punishment may be delayed, the outraged covenant of Sinai will not call in vain for retribution. With the sentiments of anguished regret for the destruction which was impending, which we find in Isaiah, and with the expression of the deepest sorrow which flowed forth from the heart of the priest of Anathoth when he beheld the realization of all that had been pre-announced, there are mingled also thoughts breathing the purest resignation, inasmuch as the Lord was righteous because his word had been disobeyed; and both justified the decree which followed upon the abandonment of the path of salvation, and expressed the strongest hope of the ultimate fulfilment of all the good which the blessed Scriptures have always held out to the returning sinner. With these convictions therefore strongly impressed upon the spirit of the followers of our religion, they have gone through the field of history overthrowing the systems of vanity which have held dominion over the world; and with the recurrence of every new calamity, a new devotion to the Almighty was ever and anon rekindled afresh in our hearts. But, alas! not as yet is the heart of stone removed from our bosom; we yet follow after the vain desires of our eyes, and we rush precipitately upon worldly gain and worldly pleasure as though they were our highest good. Let therefore the recurrence of the annual season of national mourning teach us a better lesson; let it warn us that our great commonwealth was overthrown by the

power of sin alone; that our youth were slaughtered because iniquity was found among them, and that our maidens were driven forth into captivity because the daughters of Zion were proud, and in their vanity neglected to take counsel from the revelation of their God. To be sure there is now a period of comparative prosperity for the family of Jacob, though, alas! persecution has not ceased everywhere; we admit that the lot of Israelites is more bearable than it has been in bygone ages of darkness; but let us take heed of the prophetic warnings contained in Holy Writ. There was greater prosperity in the commencement of Isaiah's mission, and when the prophet of Shiloh predicted destruction to the wife of Jeroboäm, than we can claim in the most tranquil period of our captivity; and still it is now history what with them was prediction. We must therefore beware, or else the curses contained in the law against the transgressor will reach us, let us separate ourselves from the community of Israel as we may. The Jew is bound by the law, if even he publicly renounces his allegiance to his God; no act on his part can expatriate him from the congregation of Israel, of which he is a member by the fact that his forefathers received the law in the wilderness for themselves and their descendants forever; and therefore he may rest assured that the vengeance of Heaven will fall upon him both in this world and the world to come, if he dies unrepentant or be the cause of involving others in sin.

The periods therefore which the prophets have instituted as days of fasting and penitence demand a faithful observance of all sincere Israelites. It is well becoming to the children of the patriarchs to shed a

patriotic tear over their national calamities; and it is yet more in consonance with the faith which we ought to feel for the truth of our God and King, to pray without ceasing that He may come again in his might; hold up the banner of salvation to those whom He has chosen as his servants, the people selected to proclaim his praise; establish forever the kingdom of truth over all the earth, that all the world may be strongly fortified in the only faith emanating from Him, and acknowledging the government of the Most High alone, that all the wicked of the earth may turn to Him, and all flesh may know and acknowledge that his alone are the rule and power; that He alone is God and Creator; that He is the first and the last, and that beside Him there is no saviour and redeemer. Whether then we are subjects of tyrants or citizens of free states, we may all alike pray for the diffusion of the kingdom of God, where true freedom and peace shall be the lot of all who seek the peaceful rule of the messenger who will be sent to redeem the world, under the guidance of our God, the Lord of hosts, who will alone be acknowledged the God of all, the great Eternal, who was, who is, and who will be to everlasting. Amen.

Ab 8th.
July 31st. } 5606.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE LORD OUR GUIDE.

LORD of all existence! in whose hand is the spirit of all living, remember us in mercy unto a peaceful and happy life, when Thou comest to judge thy children at the dread hour, when all pass before thy judgment-seat, to receive their doom for weal or wo, as Thou mayest decree in thy unerring wisdom. Look not, O Father! unto the greatness of our transgressions; mete not out unto us the recompense which our misdeeds have deserved; but let thy goodness prevail, and forgive and pardon, as Thou hast borne with our iniquities from our first being until this day. And thus shall thy Name be glorified, when they, whom Thou hast redeemed from perdition, shall chaunt thy glory, and rehearse unto generations yet to come the goodness Thou hast manifested; inasmuch as Thou art our God and Saviour, the Holy One of Israel, now and forever. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Among the many consolations which are recorded concerning the future of Israel, we discover the following:

כי לא בחפזון תצאו ובמנוסה לא תלכון כי הלך לפניכם ה׳ ומאספכם אלהי ישראל : ישע׳ נב׳ יא׳ :

"For not in haste shall you go out, and not in flight shall ye go; for before you goeth the Lord, and your rearward is the God of Israel." Isaiah lii. 12.

If one were merely to look at the singular changes which have within our recollection come over the nature of religious observance amongst Israelites, and carefully to note the agitation in opinion which now sways many minds: he would be apt to come to the hasty conclusion, that Judaism had seen its best days; that what is left is merely a shadow of its former self; and the signs of life which it exhibits are but the spasmodic actions of the last remnant of vital strength yet inherent in the severed limbs, which, nevertheless, must speedily cease; since their separation from the living trunk must soon deprive themselves and it of every vestige of life. Some, therefore, in fear, and others in ill-suppressed joy, look forward to the speedy dissolution of the Jewish community; and already, in anticipation, they see it mixed up with other societies; so that its existence will become a matter of history, as a thing that has been. We cannot deny that there are many events constantly passing before our eyes, which are greatly calculated to alarm those anxious for the welfare of their religion; the bonds of our union have become greatly loosened, and many have fallen away from our household, and now profess to love the strangers and their idols; others have thrown off the yoke of the law, retaining merely the name of Jews, whilst violating, in the disregard of the Sabbath, and the laws of personal sanctity, the obligations which the divine code imposes on them; and, at the same time, others, in numbers scarcely ever before known, seek the alliance of the gentiles,

and rear up their children in the customs and laws of the various nations, and teach them to inquire of those not belonging to Jacob, "Which is the way of salvation?" as though there were no God in Israel of whom we could inquire. But not alone this; for there are many who, whilst they profess to be pious, and to venerate the Lord and his word, endeavour to search out new ways, of which our fathers had no knowledge, and to open wide the door of dissension, by withdrawing the confidence of the people from their righteous teachers, who have so long and so faithfully expounded to them the will of their heavenly Father, and have shown them the way they should go, and the deeds they should do. And thus we have seen many departing from our communion; some by the force of ignorance, not knowing how to defend themselves against the assaults of those who make it their business to deprive Jews of their faith; some because they could not withstand, from an indolence of disposition, the temptations which the world at large offered to their acceptance; and others, again, because they wickedly chose their portion with the many, and despised the union with the handful of Israelites, with those who have not earthly distinctions to bestow, nor offices to confer. And thus have we also seen the strict conformity to our laws gradually decaying, till instead, that formerly a transgressor was an object of contempt from his violation of public opinion, no less than his disregard of the divine precepts, a strict conformist now excites in many taunts and ridicule, from his strange adherence to ancestral customs. Is it not so? or say, when in any epoch of our history has there been a greater defection from the ranks of truth?

Can you point out a single period, during the times of the bitterest persecutions, when so many have left the synagogue under one pretext or the other, as report speaks of what takes place in our own day? How is this? Is the air of liberty, the new atmosphere in which we have been permitted to breathe of late, so fatal to Judaism? so much more destructive than banishment, confiscation, public exposure at the pillory, and death by the hand of the common executioner? Could we stand all these dangers; could we wander forth shoeless in the burning sand, or over frozen rivers; could we sell our houses for a little bread, and our vineyard for an ass, a mean beast of burden to carry us and our children away from our native land; could we stand exposed to the taunts of a base, heartless crowd, and disregard their coarse jests and their ribald abuse; could we stretch out our neck to the headsman, and joyfully meet the stroke of death; could we behold, unmoved, tigers in the shape of men kindle the fires which were to consume us; could we attest with unfaltering lips our love to our God, whilst the burning flesh quivered on our bones, when our latest breath was to be drawn in unendurable agony:—and has it come to this, that a little freedom, the boon which the savage enjoys in his wide-spread prairie, or his forest fastness, is to stifle all aspirations for religious purity, as though, with the removal of political thraldom, all use of faith, all necessity for godliness, had fled forever? Is God less merciful in times of prosperity than in those of affliction? or is his power more limited now, to punish the transgressor, than in the days that are past? Ay, there is now fearful sinning, and terrible

will be the retribution which will overtake the evil-doers; the vengeance sleeps not, the vigilance of eternal justice is not diminished, and before we heed it, the house of the wicked will be struck by the four winds of heaven, and bury in its ruins the sinful father, the sharer of his iniquity, and the offspring who have not been taught the worship of the Lord. This, in truth, must we confidently expect, from the well-known laws of justice which govern the world, that the present apostacy from the path of religion will draw after it the same consequences as in former days. But in the meantime it is truly deplorable that so much wickedness should force itself upon our attention; that with all the disposition, so natural to men, to think well of themselves, we cannot gainsay the lamentable fact, that we have been retrograding instead of advancing in religious improvement, and that thus far the experiment of loosening the bonds of our captivity has far from corresponded with the wishes and hopes of those who, in a greater state of freedom, hoped, nay, confidently expected, that the attachment of Jews to their religion would become closer and dearer day by day.

Indeed during many years, when for being Israelites we had to endure sorrows almost incredible, which we could have avoided by outwardly conforming to the customs of our oppressors (since it was ostensibly our religion, not ourselves, they wished to injure), our longing eyes were turned to Heaven to vouchsafe us only the liberty of worshipping without being molested for the profession of our faith, and to be permitted some honourable pursuit, by which we could obtain a decent livelihood. Surely during the

ages of bitter persecution this was nearly all which was asked, almost the only thing hoped for. And the pious ones of those days imagined that, with the enlargement which they coveted, the number of devoted adherents to the law would greatly increase, and that, were the terror of the weight from without removed, no one of the seed of Jacob would act otherwise than as becomes a child of salvation under the law, and that as dutiful children all would cheerfully give honour and obedience to the Lord of all. And now the prayers of so many saints have been heard; their blood has not flowed in vain, their tears of anguish have been treasured up as a precious sacrifice before the Eternal God; and we, their descendants, live in comparative security, and we are almost every where free to walk in the paths of the faith revealed through Moses, and in many countries we can, as Jews, participate in the government, and make our voice heard in the national councils, or contend with the mighty in their country's cause on the ensanguined field of battle or the wide expanse of the ocean's billows. All this has been given to us. But how has experience deceived the hopes of the pious in their dreadful struggle! They who, when their life was, so to say, suspended before their eyes, and they dreaded to breathe aloud in the presence of their tyrants, clung with the ardour of desperation to the religion which sorrows had made dear to them, now shake off the yoke of Heaven, when their profession as Jews would give them rather honour than disgrace, as though they had no longer need to value that which was so precious to them in their affliction. And daily we see, that men and women who, because

they are Jews, were treated with contumely and exclusion from all civil rights, barely reach the shores of countries where they are unrestricted on account of religion, before they display the most thorough neglect of their faith, and excel in sinful indifference, though often better instructed and more piously educated, than those whom they find there before them. —Formerly, too, we were debarred from cultivating secular sciences; naught was left us but the development of the wisdom of the divine law; and many sighed for opportunities to dip, so to say, their oars in the flood of sciences, to understand better through this means the mysterious courses of the laws of nature, and their relation to the great concerns of life. Now this too has been granted. But do those who are thus taught fight the good battles of their religion? Are they the valiant defenders, by words and deeds, of their brothers, the Israelites? Ask of the gentile churches, look into their seminaries of learning, take a view of their council-houses, their armies, and their fleets, and you will find there the apostates who, but for this dangerous acquirement, would have lived as their fathers have done, simple in faith, devoted in their attachment to Israelites and their laws, and would either have participated in their sufferings or rejoiced in their happiness. And those often who have acquired wealth, to whom the alliances with proud families is opened through the powerful masses of gold they have heaped up, who, but for this, would have been regarded with the same scorn as their humbler brothers, now disdain to let their sons and daughters wed with children of Jacob, but seek to buy them distinctions and empty titles by giving

them in marriage to the sons and daughters of the stranger.

They, therefore, who have seen and observed all this, who hear the boast of the enemies of the Jews, that soon Israel will cease to be a people, if the same gentilizing should proceed with a naturally increased ratio, if the internal divisions should continue to multiply with the new accession of causes of strife which develop themselves daily,—they, who in the events before them, imagine they behold a new state of things never before experienced, will naturally imagine, and almost confidently expect, that now the gradual extinction of Israel so long expected, is actually impending; and that whatever of this anticipation cannot, from want of time, be accomplished in the next ten years, will certainly come to pass as an unavoidable thing. Indeed outward circumstances betoken all this as but too likely. But persons must have studied the natural inclination of the Jews, and the records of their history, to small advantage, to let themselves be so easily led away by outward exhibitions. Look, I pray you, in the scriptural records, and you will find precisely what we see this day. In prosperity our forefathers forgot the great Lord of all, who had freed them from their oppressors, who had rid their beautiful country of enemies who had often reaped what others had sown, who had gathered the grapes which their owners had carefully tended; and they served Baalim and Ashtaroth, whom they had found impotent to aid them in their days of distress. Nay, even at a later period, say in the reign of Solomon, when the manifestation of the divine presence in the temple they had just erected proved

to the people that the Lord dwelt in their midst, how little did they heed their heavenly King, and how ungrateful were they in spite of all the peace and prosperity that blessed their own Palestine, and the great degree of knowledge which flowed from their schools, and the high civilization and refinement which had taken up their abode in the mountains of Judah, on the plains of Jezreël, on the coasts of the great sea, and the banks of the fertilizing Jordan. Scarcely had the wise king, who himself had been misled by his love for strange women, been gathered to his fathers, than the fell spirit of disunion broke the common bond which had made Israel one people, and Palestine one country. The new king of the rival government set up calves for worship at Beth-el and Dan, and the part of the people, separated from the rule of the house of David, was also soon torn away from the path of the national religion. We speak of the evils of the present day; they are fearful indeed; and no lover of truth, no friend of the Mosaic institutions, can either palliate or defend them; but in the extent of forgetfulness of the righteous way the men of antiquity exceeded those of our own age. Now the number of transgressors is large indeed, but at worst it is confined to individuals; but then an entire nation, with few exceptions, at least but few are recorded, followed the course of destruction. Yet there is one thing in which the present renders the evil more permanent than in the former period. It is this. During our residence in Palestine, no matter if we sinned, we continued to be Israelites, we were one people on our national soil, and the worship of

idols left us still surrounded by our brothers,* and we could return through repentance, and so could our children, to the safe bosom of the divine legislation.

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* There is no question, but that the Israelites during their sojourn in Palestine never forgot altogether the service of the Lord. He was under all circumstances their *national God*, even whilst they incorporated the idols of the heathen in their system of worship. The reader is referred to the history of Elijah's sacrifice on Carmel, where he clearly asks the people how long they would hesitate between the Lord and Baäl, which evidently proves, that though they ascribed certain propitiatory powers to their Baäl, they had not cast off the idea of the God of the Bible as the Supreme Ruler of all. (1 Kings xviii. 21.) See also the history of the nations brought by Shalmanesser, king of Assyria, to supply the place of the Israelites whom he had led away from their land (2 Kings xvii. 24–34); it is a curious passage, and will give the inquirer a better idea of the notions of the heathens respecting their love for idols: it is doubtlessly this,—they thought that they could not approach the great Creator without some mediatorial power, which power they represented under a thousand fanciful shapes, all more or less false, all more or less disgusting. This peculiar idea, of an intermediate agency, is not unknown to the enlightened nations of modern times, and they, like the gentiles of old, forget almost in the worship of their mediator, the service which, even according to their own views, is in a great degree due to the Supreme. Doubtless this was the case with the Israelites, and they adored the Lord in conjunction with their follies. The sin is not the less heinous, for we were commanded, "You shall make nothing with me;" but as the idea of the power of the Lord was always held up in their minds, the return to Him was at all times easy, whenever they felt, by some calamity which overtook them, that they had offended the Power who alone could save them. Circumcision was not omitted, and probably most of the ceremonial laws were held sacred; although we have evidence that they were frequently violated; but renounced they never were. Heathenism is more tolerant than Christianity and Mahomedanism; it allowed all sorts of conjunctions in its systems and practices; whereas they who embrace now the religions of the day, are at once and forever severed from Juda-

But now this is unfortunately no more the case; they who leave the Synagogue, either through apostacy, through the neglect of circumcision, or through intermarriage with gentiles, become part and parcel with the non-Israelites among whom we dwell, and they and their descendants, except under rare circumstances, become strangers, and must remain so, to the worship of the God of Israel; they merge into the nations of the earth, and have neither right nor inheritance in the congregation of Jacob. Here then we have a view of the past and present condition of the sinners in Israel; and any reflecting mind can well measure the dark and bright sides of the picture. One thing no one will be able to deny that, as in the national sinning during the first temple, before and since, there was a recuperative power by which the people, in a greater or less degree, returned to their own God, though they had so often and so long worshipped the idols of their neighbours or the falsehoods of their own invention, so there are now, compared to the entire mass of Jews, but a very small number who doubt in the fundamental truths of our faith. Nay, of the many who have forsaken us, few indeed have done so from conviction, though this makes their loss to us not the less certain, nor less deplorable on their and our account. Still let it not

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ism; the Sabbath is changed, circumcision is abolished, the synagogue is given up for the church, the *Jewish nation for the world*, and the apostates and those who marry out of the pale, become *lost to Israel*, and they entail upon themselves and their descendants, "all the consequences of the violated covenant which are written in the book of the law" (Deut. xxix. 20), to as great a degree as the idolaters of old.

be forgotten that, in the prophetic vision, Daniel already announced, more than two thousand three hundred years ago: "Many* shall be purified and made white, and be tried; but the wicked will do wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand; but the wise will understand." (Daniel xii. 10.) Here is a direct announcement that in the trials and purifications to which the nation of Israel is to be subjected, some there shall be who will be purified and be rendered resplendent in purity by the very means which the world calls evil; whilst the wicked will pursue their course of destruction, contemning the chastisement of the Lord, and thus render themselves permanently outcasts from the communion of the faithful, who will, by constantly dwelling upon the ways of God with man, and tracing always the effect to its cause, see, ultimately, the righteousness of the divine decrees, though in the beginning all appeared doubt and uncertainty; whereas they, who are wicked, will, in their worldliness and obduracy of heart, remain strangers to the best of wisdom, and sink into that perdition which they have in truth so ardently coveted, through the perversity of their iniquitous conduct.

Through captivity and the edge of the sword, we

* This prophecy must not be taken as an expression of fatalism, as though certain persons were predoomed to sin; only that in the course of events transgressions would undoubtedly take place; but that notwithstanding this the principle of righteousness would triumph, and the sorrows and tribulations would confirm those who have the fear of the Lord in their heart. It is in fact a blissful promise of the ultimate triumph of virtue, and the assurance that all will tend to a happy end.

were taught, in the days of our national existence, that destruction only is the portion of those who forsake the Lord. And in adversity we were instructed that those are not forgotten, who firmly place their trust in the Rock of Ages, the everlasting One, to whom appertain the power and the dominion. Israel has thus been tried in the furnace of affliction, and also in the sunshine of prosperity. Unmitigated calamities, unceasing banishment, daily slaughter, would have at length destroyed us, had we remained ever so constant in our attachment to our religion; for the worshippers would have ceased, when the people of Israel had all been annihilated. The tribulations, however, were an excellent means to try, to purify, and to make us white. The wicked, who had not the Lord in their heart, started back at the sight of the dark vaults of the noisome dungeon, and they fainted before the sharp edge of the drawn sword; they fell off and became mingled with the oppressors; and from them sprung many who were the bitterest enemies to those of their fathers' faith. Whilst, in the same times, the martyrs persevered in their righteousness, and proved to the world how the Jew can love his God; how he can prize beyond every possession the hope in the truth of his Father; how he can despise all things of earth, and cast away life, if thus only can he seal his truth and his faith. The defection of the weak is to us a beacon, a warning, pointing out the dangers of the deeds for which these have been cut off from the community of Israel. The heroism of the brave,—brave not in worldly battle, but in a contest in which angels of purity might fittingly have participated, is also a beacon, an incentive,

a guiding-star, the bright blaze of the lighthouse upon the distant promontory, pointing out to us the track into the safe harbour, where we can anchor with unfailing security, in the haven of righteousness, our storm-tossed bark, when the voyage of life is ended. Again there have broken over us days of greater calm and peace; the world no longer professes to hate the Jews, they are acknowledged as children of a common Father; and every where there are many who speak well of Israel, and who seek to promote our welfare. The race for scientific improvement and far-reaching enterprise is again open to us, and many of us scarcely remember even now the days of sorrow, which we fain would hope have passed away. But "Jeshurun has also again grown fat, and he kicks;" many of us are not able to withstand the temptation of prosperity; they feel themselves better, in their own imagination, than their humbler and less enlightened brothers; and they reach after distinctions which, to Jews, are not easily attainable, and for alliances which remove them from their own friends. But at the same time there are many, and these a hundred-fold greater in number than the others, who glory in their descent and do honour to their name: these discover in the improved state of our political condition no motive for self-gratulation, but one of thankfulness to the Deity, who has looked down upon our affliction, and remembered unto us the covenant with our fathers, that He would not forsake us, nor ever leave us because of his great and holy Name by which we are called. Let the wicked, then, as is in their nature, leave the fold where all can find so sure a shelter; let them join themselves to the idols which

they love; they are only pursuing the ancient path of transgression; and the house of Israel will be strengthened when those have left it, who brought it no strength by their nominal adherence, but who, on the contrary, were a scandal to all by their irreligious conduct, by their love for the world, by their forgetfulness of Heaven.

Who can doubt that we are pursuing our destiny under all circumstances in which we may be placed? that there has been one continued chain of interlinked events from the call of Abraham, through the slavery in Egypt, the conquest of Palestine, our expulsion, persecution, and present period of ease and comparative freedom? Is there not a particular thread running through all these periods? Were there not times when our extinction was more imminent than under present circumstances? Let him gainsay this who has no faith in God; but we, who hope in humility, and trust in unwavering confidence, look upon all that occurs before our eyes as a mere phase in our history, as something to which after-generations will refer and draw thence a lesson, as we do to-day from events which to us belong to the past. Israel will not be exterminated, neither by the anger nor the favour of the gentiles; but we shall move onward, retarded, perhaps, at times, but never long, let mankind rage and forge fetters, or devise counsel as they may; we are the messengers of God, and we are urged onward, be we willing or unwilling in our service. Israel now is sinning, great is the breach which the law has suffered; but the people will return to Him who has smitten them, and glory in the Lord, and sanctify themselves in the God of Israel. Generation after

generation may sink into the grave, the green turf may rest upon the bosom of millions who are not yet born unto the house of Jacob, without the coming of the Son of David. But notwithstanding this, let no one despair of the *sure coming* future; for though we may doubt that which we do not deem probable, the captives *shall* be let loose, and the ransomed shall go to Zion in triumph. And should we, overpowered by fear, despair of the good promised to Jacob: then let us reflect that it is not a mortal who announced his will, but our God and Creator; with Him length of days produces no forgetfulness, lapse of years no abatement of strength; and surely He will sustain his people in their wanderings, and protect them against themselves, that they be not lost in the stream of time, which has swept away many and great nations. But to us, lo! a sun is rising in the dim distant East, and his rays shall spread over the face of the earth, and nations shall see the glory of God revealed, and all shall be refreshed by the blessing of truth, which shall be poured out over all flesh. From mountain to mountain the joyful message shall be sent, and in Zion shall be proclaimed "Thy God reigneth;" and from every corner of the earth shall come forth the children of Jacob, they even who, through the sinning of their fathers, have been lost among the gentiles, and they shall bow down before the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem. Not one shall be wanting of the priests of the Most High; for before us shall go the Lord, and though this happen far down in the ages of futurity, we need not fear the fulfilment, for our rereward is the God of Israel,

who lives for eternity, and to whose name be ascribed glory, now and forever. Amen.

Elul 6th. } 5606.
Aug. 28th. }

DISCOURSE XXV.

GOD RULES THE WORLD.

O God, our Father! who dwellest on high, and whose eyes survey all on earth beneath, we approach Thee in humble thankfulness because of the many acts of mercy and truth which Thou hast rendered unto Thy servants. In vain were it for us to appeal to our own deeds as though they justly could lay claim to thy bounty; we have done nothing to deserve thy blessings; for the majority of our doings is emptiness, and the days of our life are as nothing before Thee, for all is vanity. But Thou graciously willest to bless; and from the abundance of thy goodness flows the rich plenty which rejoices the heart of the husbandman; comes the joy which sheds a sweet light over our days on earth; springs the health which gives strength and elasticity to our limbs, and issues the wisdom which enlightens our souls. And still we are sinful before thy eyes; we regard with complacency our own conceits, and imagine that of our own understanding we are wise, that of our own feeble industry success crowns our work; and thus we hasten along in pride of heart, and we will not hearken

to thy instruction, we desire not to number our days, thereby to bring our hearts to wisdom; but we love what Thou hatest, and we pursue with unnatural avidity what thy word has condemned. This has been our course, as it was that of our fathers, and we have lived in thy world without feeling that we are dependent solely on thy bounty, that thy breath hath made us, that thy word can render us again as naught. Be it then thy will, O our Father! to cause wisdom to enter into our souls, so that we may see Thee in all that befalls us, that we may recognize thy overruling providence when prosperity smiles in our dwellings, and also that when the voice of sorrow is heard in our chambers; in order that we may subject our souls to thy service, and endeavour to seek for the wisdom which springs so abundantly from thy word, which Thou didst reveal to our fathers.—And let us beseech Thee, Guardian of Israel! to watch over the remnant of thy people that have escaped, and protect them against the evil counsels which the aliens of thy worship may frame against them. Lo! we are powerless; we are exposed to the fury of the ungodly; but in Thee there is power to save, and to arrest the arm of the destroyer. Cause, then, tidings of salvation to be heard in our boundaries, and break speedily the yoke of the gentiles from our necks; so that we may be able to worship Thee in singleness of faith, in peace and security on that day, when, under the reign of the man whom Thou wilt send, thy dominion will be established in every place, and thy name be adored as the One who alone is God, who alone is Saviour. Amen!

BRETHREN!

In the affairs of nations, as in those of individuals, success is but too often promotive of pride; and those, who have seen prosperity following upon their exertions, speedily imagine that they are placed in an elevated position by something inherent in themselves; it is, in their view, through the strength of their hand, the plans so well laid by themselves that failure was impossible, and it is the wisdom which so pre-eminently distinguishes them, which has naturally brought about the wealth, the prosperity, the renown which they now claim as peculiarly their portion. In seeing one of a crowd speaking and acting after this manner, we very correctly ascribe it to an undue and false appreciation of self which no one can share with him; since no other beyond himself can see with his eyes or experience the same sentiments which animate the actor. But if communities vaunt of their progress, if entire nations forget that they are accountable: the folly, though equally great as in the individual, is not so easily apparent to the observer; so many are engaged in the same exhibition of pride, that very few indeed imagine that the guilt is partly their own; and hence the moralist is little heeded who admonishes his countrymen to ponder well over their acts, and not to arrogate to themselves the power of self-sufficiency which he sees good cause to deplore. When arrogance overcomes the individual, and he forgets that the One above watches all his ways, he speedily lapses into sin; because he forgets to consult the oracles of his God, to learn thence what is demanded of him as a sojourner in the world of the Creator, where all his fellow-beings are permitted to

dwell and to enjoy their existence equally with himself, though they be the poorest of the poor, and he the mightiest among the mighty. Just so it is with nations. When they forget the struggles of their infant state, the dangers and doubts that attended their assuming rank among the families of the earth—how they themselves exclaimed against the oppression of their rulers and the injustice of arbitrary enactments; and then become themselves the oppressors of the weak, the spoilers of the defenceless: we must say, that these nations have grown proud through their success—they forget that an almighty Hand aided them in their righteous quarrel, and that their transgression now will claim its due visitation from the unerring retributive Justice, which is discoverable in the government of the world no less than in the fate of families. And when the ruling powers of states forget their dependence upon the Supreme, the individual members of the community are but too apt to follow the example set them in their private conduct; and with the increase of national pride, sinning in private circles increases also; the love of dominion in the state produces its concomitant, love of aggrandizement, in individuals; and when the rulers forget the law of neighbourly love by assailing adjoining territories, or by governing with arbitrary sway the dissentients in their own boundaries, private men will speedily follow the example to exact with rigour from their debtors, or fraudulently to obtain advantage over those whom business compels to have intercourse with them. And because the bonds of morality are loosened, and because accountability is removed from the thoughts as far as possible: dissi-

pation in its various forms will spread abroad, the law of God will be neglected, and individual and public prosperity will hasten naturally downward on the path of ruin.

But no individual ever rose to distinction, to wealth, or height in wisdom, unless the blessing of Heaven attended his efforts; great standing, riches and learning are gifts bestowed on the undeserving mortal for the benefit of all who come within the sphere of his action; they are trusts deposited, returnable at the will of the Giver, for the promotion of the good of man and the glory of the Creator. Just as the sun is the centre of light, heat, and power, for the vast planetary system which revolves around him within the spheres of his attraction: so is the endowed child of earth the distributor of the good confided to his stewardship, held as this is under the strictest surveillance of his Creator. So David sang: "And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved; Lord, by thy favour Thou hadst made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." And even thus is it when states are at peace; when their commerce flourishes; when their fields teem with plenty; when their flocks and herds increase on their hills and in their valleys; when the arts thrive; when education is extended; when there is no migration from their towns, nor wailing and breaches within their villages: who was it that granted all this? was it the wisdom of their laws? was it the honesty of those in authority? was it the intelligence of the merchant—the skill of the artisan—the valour of the soldier—the bravery of the mariner? or was it the blessing of God which was showered down upon the

land, even as the rain drops from heaven, to refresh the toilsome labour of the hand of man, which otherwise would perish after all the exertion and skill then exhausted in vain? Yes, it is even so; the signs of prosperity which you discover are the evidences of Divine favour, and as such only should they be viewed, and as incentives to employ the bounties of Providence in diffusing general welfare wherever the hand of the governors can be felt for good; in making as light as possible the burdens of the poor; in holding with a strong and even hand the scales of justice; in scattering light and knowledge in the souls of those whom penury and ignorance seem to mark as their own; in breaking the bonds of the oppressed; and what is more than all, since it embraces every thing, by instilling universally the knowledge of the revealed truths of God, and in drawing the indifferent to the service of Heaven. This should not be done so much by direct and violent interference in the rights of conscience, as by the rulers carefully shaping their course in accordance with the principles of universal justice, and giving every freedom to teachers of morality to train the minds of their hearers in the way marked out by the Scriptures, the moral principles of which are now so universally acknowledged by all civilized men, however they yet differ upon the nature of the Supreme who rules the world. Herein too we can, as Israelites, contribute all in our power; for in extending the principles of mercy and truth, although they be not directly recognized as appertaining to our religion, it is evident that they are at all events remotely derived therefrom; since only from our Scrip-

tures have mankind obtained that pure standard of excellence, which is the boast of modern civilization.

It is, therefore, fully in accordance with a deeply-seated religious sentiment, to appoint national days of thanksgiving for benefits received, as also days of fasting and prayer in times of distress. For by this means the God of the Bible is acknowledged in seasons of prosperity as the great Benefactor of the state, and as the chief Ruler to whom all eyes are directed to give them their food in due season, which his open-handed bounty so mercifully grants unto them. It tells that the people feel that they themselves cannot enforce the blessings; that their own hand is powerless; that Divine favour alone brings to perfection that in which they labour. And should calamity oppress the land, and the citizens resort to prayer, the ancient practice of the patriarchs, to ask of the Lord to stay the plague—what does it show? but that they feel within themselves that they are helpless before the poured-out wrath of Heaven; that unless He averts the shafts from the head of impotent mortals they must sink into the grave, or be crushed by the evil which threatens their peace. It is then that men feel that there is a Power, the highest and the holiest to direct all their steps; that there is a Helper whose throne is from everlasting, in whose hand it is to give strength and greatness to all. And well says the prophet Jeremiah, x. 6, 7:

מאין כמוך ה׳ גדול אתה וגדול שמך בגבורה : מי לא יראך מלך הגוים כי לך יאתה כי בכל חכמי הגוים ובכל מלכותם מאין כמוך : ירמ׳ י׳ ו׳ ז׳ :

"Forasmuch as there is none like thee, O Lord! great art Thou, and great is thy name in might. Who would not fear Thee, O King of the nations? for unto Thee doth it appertain, forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms there is none like Thee."

In many passages of the Scriptures the Being whom we adore is called emphatically "*The Lord the God of Israel;*" this does not, however, say that He is aught else than the universal Sovereign. He revealed himself as the *only* God to our father Abraham, and this one perpetuated, through his pious teaching, the truths he had learned, among his own descendants and those who joined themselves to them; and as these men formed a class by themselves, as those who adored but one Deity and this the benevolent universal Father of all, He, the Lord Eternal, was naturally called on by them as the Lord, their King, the God of Israel; not to exclude others from his dominion, but to show that they acknowledged none save Him and desired to be called by his name. In truth, then, our God is the universal King of the nations; in prosperity and sorrow He is the *One* who grants blessings or vouchsafes relief; and though nations have gone astray after the conceits of their imaginations, and have formed gods out of trees of the forest, and of gold from Ophir, and of silver dug out of the mines from the bowels of the earth: the day will come when all will acknowledge and discover, "that the gods which have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from beneath these heavens;" when they will cast aside the errors they have learned from their fathers, and worship, as we do, the Lord Eternal, the King of the nations.

How soothing has this reflection always been to the scattered sons of Israel, and how pleasant is it for us to reflect on it at this day! Long has the world striven against their creed, and against their hopes. But every step that civilization takes, the deeper a pure morality strikes root in the hearts of men: the more are our practices followed and imitated by those who formerly loved not the Israelites and their ways. We are already enjoying in anticipation the ultimate triumph of holiness, in that the nations have learned to call upon the Almighty, the Bestower of life, for his assistance in the hour of distress, and to acknowledge his goodness when they are blessed with plenty, health, and peace. If this be done in sincerity; if men assemble this day in the many towns of this far-extended land, and truly feel that they are dependents upon the same One God who spoke at Sinai; if they thereby deem themselves impelled to be kind to the afflicted; to relieve the poor; to clothe the naked; to comfort the mourners; to open the bonds of the oppressed; to cultivate good-will and friendship to each other; to guard sacredly the constitutional barriers against the encroachment of arbitrary power; to foster peace, not alone within their own borders but also with neighbouring nations; in short to act towards all men as they would desire these to act towards them: it will be a beautiful vindication of the divine image impressed on the human soul, it will be a powerful proof that the liberties of these States are well established; inasmuch as the great Sovereign, who hates iniquity, is here feared by the millions who inhabit the fertile plains and valleys of this vast country, who urge the car of commerce over the heaving

ocean, and the many rivers which intersect the beautiful domain which has been assigned here by Providence to the industry and enjoyment of a hardy race of men, a domain which stretches from the Atlantic to the Silent ocean on the West, and which embraces climates of almost every degree, and produces nearly all the things necessary for the comfort and wants of man. But if the worship of thanksgiving be merely performed because it appears well in the eyes of one another to profess devotion; if the hearts be turned to iniquity; if oppression and injustice are to be defended; if truth is to be neglected: then indeed are the inhabitants of the land actually inviting the wrath of offended Justice; because they know their Master, and still they rebel against him. For how can an offering of the lips be accepted, whilst that is national and individual sin, which his word, universally known and universally believed in plainly and emphatically condemns? But let us hope that, not alone for the happiness of ourselves whose lot is cast here, but for the progress of liberty over all the earth, true religiousness, as expounded by virtue and philanthropy, based upon the fear of the King of the nations, may have struck deep roots in the hearts of the millions that live under the mild sway of the laws which render this Republic the home of the free, the refuge of the oppressed; and that the day set apart for thanksgiving and praise may not pass away, without enkindling anew a firm resolve to deserve in some slight degree, so far as sinful man can contribute by his own acts, the continued mercy of the Creator. A day of thanksgiving, if it deserve to be so called in any, nay the least, sense of the word, should be a check upon na-

tional pride, and a safeguard against national crimes which spring from this polluted source. For what does it mean when an entire state comes to return thanks for plenty, for peace, for health, for liberty? but to acknowledge that each and all of these gifts are not the result of human labour, however we may have contributed to the same as instruments of the Supreme Ruler of the world; or else why return a pretended gratitude which we do not feel? Else why ascribe glory to God for what we feign He has given to us, when we imagine ourselves within our own hearts the architects of our fortune? Else, wherefore will we say that the Lord has caused our mountain to stand firm, when our souls swell with pride and we say within ourselves, Our hands have gotten us all this greatness? And if thus we banish national pride, the acts which flow from an assumed self-sufficiency will naturally not find favour in the national councils, and not have an abiding-place in the halls of justice. But equity, and charity, and universal love will characterize the people in their intercourse with one another and in their dealings with foreign nations; and the liberties which now are the equal rights of the humblest of the inhabitants, will descend unimpaired as the heirloom of a wise and virtuous ancestry to many, yea many generations yet to come.

So much as regards us Israelites as mere citizens, as equal participators in the government of a country where of right we have an undisputed claim to protection and the pursuit of happiness; for in this capacity we are bound to cherish in concert with our countrymen of every other persuasion the duties of a good citizen, and endeavour by all means in our

power so to aid in the direction of public affairs, that the government may be administered to the advantage of all, and to the injury of none, so far as this is practicable through human agency. We are bound as such not to wink at wrong done by the persons selected to perform the public functions; but to upbraid them in the constitutional and peaceful manner befitting freemen, whenever they become derelict to their trust. Our religion demands this, and places us upon the same platform with our fellow-citizens to act thus faithfully in our franchise, a duty equally great as to defend our liberties, when assailed by a foreign foe, with arms in our hands, in a personal conflict of man to man. Still, in doing this, we have not yet discharged the peculiar obligation which our suffering religion demands at our hands. Let us beware that we be not misled in our personal safety, that it is anything within our own power which has struck the shackles from our limbs, which ages of darkness and wo had fastened around them. Let us beware that the pride of security do not infuse the poison of infidelity into us, and we be thus induced to forget the Lord on the day of our prosperity, Him whom we invoked when mankind raged in burning wrath against us and our heavenly law. Let us beware that we imagine not that the acquisition of liberty absolves us of the least obligation, which the letter and spirit of the law demand of the sons of Israel. But it will be well for us to remember, that all the good which we have lately received is an additional incentive to greater holiness; and we should reflect that, if our fathers persevered to call on their God and to follow his precepts when all was darkness

around them, how much more are we bound by every motive of gratitude to exhibit a consistent course of religion now, and here, where we are as untrammelled as the proudest of the sects in the land, where there is no right or power inherent in any set of men to hinder us in our religious exercises, or to abridge our political immunity and franchise, on account of our speculative opinions on religion, or our positive acts in obedience to what we deem our duty. It need not be mentioned to you, that Judaism has in this land the amplest field for its development; since the commonest understanding will perceive this at the first glance of the question. The blessing of Providence, influencing a wise legislation, has removed here from us every hindrance which could be imposed upon our religious life. Let it then be our study to improve the opportunity thus given, and to exhibit by our conduct that we are worthy the liberty which is ours. Some men may perhaps be foolish enough to imagine, that to live as Jews will detract from their standing in the community, and hence they may transgress, merely to be as like non-Israelites as possible, if outward appearance can do this. But independently of such an excuse being no justification for sin, it is the reverse of truth. Sincerity will always demand respect; and whatever secret dislike some fanatics may have to our religion, none will think the less of those who openly profess their God, and scrupulously obey his laws. In truth, the Israelites are always safest on the path of duty; with the world it will give them respectability, if even this could weigh the least when higher obligations are concerned; and as regards our relation with the mighty King of na-

tions, it will obtain for us his blessing, which excels all that heart can wish, or the most exalted imagination desire. Let it therefore be our aim to love our Father in all relations of life, in every position in which He may place us. If He grants us prosperity, let us thank "the One who is good and bestoweth benefits on the undeserving;" and if He sends visitation to try our constancy, let us utter our humble prayer, "Blessed be the righteous Judge." If our faith be thus strong, our devotion thus pure, we shall move onward in holiness; misfortunes will only purify us from guilt, and prosperity will add new lustre to our piety, and render us worthy children of salvation, as servants of the great God of heaven and earth, who is one and alone, eternal and ever-blessed. Amen.

Kislev 7th. } 5607.*
Novem. 26th. }

DISCOURSE XXVI.

ZION'S REJOICING.

O Lord Eternal, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob! our fathers have told us the deeds Thou wroughtest for their sakes in days gone by, that Thou drovest out nations from before them, and gavest unto them the inheritance of peo-

* A severe attack of sickness caused an interruption of more than two months in my public duties. Hence the long space between this and the preceding address.

ple more powerful and numerous than they; and that under thy favour they dwelt securely in the land which Thou hadst assigned to them as their possession forevermore. But they sinned against Thee, and they were driven forth into exile, and they were made to feel the weight of thy indignation; and when afterwards a remnant returned and again dwelt in the fields of Israel, they experienced anew thy protecting arm, in those days of our national struggle, when the few overcame the many, the weak the powerful, the pure the unholy, the righteous those who endeavoured to make them transgress the precepts of thy law, when thy power was manifested in saving the helpless out of the grasp of the ungodly oppressor. May it be then thy will now to let our prayer come before Thee in favour, and shield thy children under the shadow of thy wings, and let thy protection be to them a sure defence against the arrows which their enemies may in the presumption of invincible strength launch against them; so that all evil machinations may be rendered as naught, and we thy people be left unconsumed, though we have not the power of the sword to defend ourselves, nor mighty counsellors to plead our cause. Do this, O Father! not for our sakes, but for the glory of thy holy Name by which we are called. Amen.

Brethren!

In the vision of the prophet Zechariah, who lived at the commencement of the second temple, we find ample evidence that the restoration which had then been just accomplished, by the return of the Jews from Babylon, was not that great return of the Lord

to Zion of which the prophets who lived during the time of the first house had spoken, and that consequently another and greater event, than the rebuilding of the temple of Solomon, was absolutely needed in order that the predictions of the many prophets whom God had sent to his people might be accomplished. When Zechariah spoke the temple had been restored, and the sacrifices were again offered up on the altar, morning and evening; still was there a future for Israel, more glorious and peaceful than the period they were then enjoying, foreshadowed to the prophet's knowledge; and thus he spoke:

רני ושמחי בת ציון כי הנה בא ושכנתי בתוכך נאם ה׳ : זכר׳ ב׳ יד׳ :

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! for behold I am coming, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." Zechar. ii. 14.

The idea of the regeneration of the world is one peculiarly dear to all who love their species, and they conceive that the present state of things is not the final intention of the Creator. They go out and cast their look over outward creation; and they there discover a constant mutation of all material things; nothing remains stationary, but it either progresses to an onward state, or falls back from a point of excellence which it has once attained. Even the solid crust of the earth, with its mountains and oceans, is constantly assuming new appearances, and dry land takes the place of the water, and this again seizes on fertile fields which it converts to its domain; so mountains sink into the plain, or spring up again

therefrom, thrown down or upheaved by a mighty convulsion of nature. So animals and plants are varied by circumstances, by education, training, and culture, and new kinds are constantly presented to our examination, produced by the wonderful joining of two species assuming partly the properties of both the prototypes. In addition to this we see that climate and soil have a wonderful effect in imparting new properties to plants and animals, nay the human race itself is sensibly affected by outward circumstances, both in its mental and physical capacities, and with a change of conditions, a stationary state is not to be looked for. But every one who thinks must have observed that, in addition to changes in individuals, there are witnessed transitions in masses as regards feelings and sentiments, and after contemplating in history the manners and customs of a people at one period of its existence, we shall find it at a later period obeying others of a different nature and tendency. And why? Because a progress, or a retrogression has occurred, and the new circumstances have produced their corresponding effect. In the same manner also every state or association of men, of which the chronicles have handed down the story, has changed its position in regard to its own internal organization, no less than its influence on other states; and those communities that once were great, are now known no more among the families of the earth, and others have sprung up from their ruins, or have, so to say, emerged from the obscurity of an unknown origin, and have assumed a rank and a name amidst those who contend for the dominion of the earth.—Opinions likewise have risen or fallen,

have ruled or succumbed, as the case might be; and there is not a system, either of government or religion, which has been able permanently to maintain its footing on earth, or even among that very people which was the first to establish it. There is only one thing, or system would be a better word, which has stood since its first institution, and with it the nation which has been its bearer, and this is the law of Moses borne and professed by the people of Israel, of the former of which our worship is the emblem, and of the latter of which we are the representatives. Since the birth of Abraham, how many have been the modes of worship invented! All sorts of emblems have been instituted to render manifest to the eye the peculiar notions which an arbitrary assumption or a careful invention had evolved; and monuments as firm almost as the primitive mountains were piled up, and temples were reared as indestructible almost as time itself; and classes of priests were appointed to preserve intact the so-called wisdom which was placed in their custody: and still where are the systems of Egypt, of Chaldea, of Greece, of Gaul, and of Rome? There are mighty ruins, which betoken the great skill of their builders, and prove how dear all these errors must have been to their adherents; but who now heeds the gods that erst were invoked in the columned temples of Thebes, and Babylon, and Athens, and Corinth, and Delphi, and Rome, or the lakes of Etruria, or the hilltops of Cambria, or the forests of Scandinavia? Who now values the legends of the Brahmins of India, or the laws of the fire-worshippers, among civilized men who have learned a better and simpler faith? Yea, the laws of ancient pagan-

ism, which formerly were obeyed by the most refined or the most renowned for bravery, have already sunk into oblivion, and only amuse the curious inquirer into antiquity by their strange and unaccountable deviation from common sense; and those that remain still in vogue among men, are fast lapsing into that neglect from which similar views have not been saved. And with this abrogation of systems, the nations that upheld them also vanished, and though there are now men in Egypt, and Greece, and Assyria, and Italy, and Persia, they are not the same nations that formerly dwelt in those countries; for these were overpowered by foreign invaders, and those who remained have become so mixed up with their enemies that their identity cannot be ascertained. It is not for us to go farther into the investigation of this subject at present; since we only wish to connect it with our law and our nation, and of these we then boldly maintain that they have been exposed to many and mighty vicissitudes and influences, but still they have stood the storm undestroyed, as the mighty mountain-ridge which defies alike the lightning of heaven, or the silent encroachments of the wintry frost, though both leave their traces visible upon its hardy and lofty sides; and which rears aloft its cloud-capt head, though avalanches tumble from its summit, or the busy hands of man with instruments of destruction force a path over it to the valley beyond. Just so has it been with our law and with our people. Centuries have passed since to a solitary old man, a stranger in a country which was not his, there came a voice in the stillness of the night: "Fear not, Abram, I am thy

shield, thy reward shall be exceedingly great." And still we hear this same promise in all the phases of our being, whether as servants in Egypt; as recipients of the divine revelation in the desert; as the enlightened nation of worshippers of a pure God in Palestine; and as exiles pulled and torn by contending factions of gentiles, but all agreeing in maltreating the sons of the wanderer from Chaldea. Yes, before a child had been born to Abraham, a knowledge of an undefiled worship was revealed to him, and he was promised that to him and his descendants the God of heaven and earth would always be God. And has not the event confirmed the truth of revelation? Follow only the history of Israel from that epoch, and you will find very few periods of ease and sunshine; calamity after calamity burst over us with all the terrific violence of an expected annihilation; and we were at the same time assailed by disunion within our boundaries, and by the sword of the enemy without, aided in its destructive wrath by famine and pestilence. Whatever sorrow could be imagined and whatever violence man could commit, all came over us as the towering waves sweep over the exposed sea-shore on the day of the fury of the storm; but the calamities exhausted themselves in vain; thousands upon thousands of Israelites lay stretched out dead on the field of battle; thousands upon thousands of women and children perished from famine and the ruthless hand of the foe; thousands upon thousands were devoured by wild beasts as an amusement to their captors; our religion was proscribed, the very site of our temple was prohibited to our approach: and what availed all this effort? Our

people rose from the slaughter, our religion emerged from the ocean of blood, and both stood towering above the calamity which had threatened to overwhelm them, yea as the mountain stands reflecting back the light of the setting sun, when the clouds, which in the afternoon poured down rain and fire and hid the face of the sky, have passed from the atmosphere.— And when yet farther injury was attempted, when entire communities were compelled by the fear of death to abjure their faith; when every where mankind met us with hostile intent, and endeavoured to embitter our days, because we loved our God; when many made our bodies like the street over which the wayfarer passes without heeding where he plants his foot: we still remained undestroyed; we heeded not the fury of the assailant; we invoked still the name of our Father in heaven; and the enemy passed away from the earth, and we arose from our fall, and stood upright in the presence of our Creator, to sanctify his Memorial and to proclaim the truth of his word.

All this is no idle boast, not the declamation of mere oratory, but the sober language of truth, to which much more might be added without exhausting the subject. Now no one who ponders on the picture just presented to him, can help asking himself this momentous question: "What can be the object to be gained by the preservation of this law and of this people? Was there any necessity inherent in their nature, or in the consequences to be derived therefrom, that should needs draw down upon them the evident watchfulness of the Creator, to render them permanent amidst all that is perishing, and unchang-

ing amidst all that was called into being merely to fall into decay?" Let us endeavour to find the answer by studying the records of our people and the predictions contained therein concerning them. Respecting their history it will be readily discovered that they always acted in contradiction to the majority of mankind; insignificant in numbers in their palmiest days, they stood always aloof from other men, and were never numbered among the nations. It was not then by assimilating with others that their identity was to be preserved, it was not by adopting the theories of other people that their religion was to be enriched; but the reverse precisely was to be the case: they should keep far from foreign associates; and their law was to be the model for others to improve thereby their legislation; for it is said, "And ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation;" that is to say, as the priest officiates not for himself alone, but for those also who send him, so should Israel be in the great temple of the Lord, the whole earth, an officiating nation to make atonement for all, and to bring all to worship before that everlasting Truth, which they themselves adore. Had now our people and our faith only met with triumphs in their progress, had stronghold after stronghold of error fallen before their steady, all-conquering approach: it might then have been said that their worldly success caused them to prosper, but that they too would fall before the blast of adversity, that the existence of the one and the truth of the other were no more established by their prosperity, than were the existence of Rome and Egypt and their respective religions and state policies. But from the very mo-

ment of our commencement, which is the birth of Isaac, Abraham's child of promise, began the ages of our trials. I will not recite to you the proof, for the words of Scripture furnish you with them in the amplest manner; and these trials have continued to this very hour; in all variety and form of sorrow and prosperity have the events of history passed over us; and we are yet undestroyed, though perhaps diminished by the violent abrasions which the destructive hand of man has wrought; and judging from analogy, therefore, we are empowered to maintain that, since it is not likely that any greater dangers than those encountered hitherto will occur hereafter, we are safe against any future contingency, or in other words, that so long as the earth stands the people and religion of Israel will have their abiding-place in the daily history of mankind. Having arrived at this point, we may maintain farther that, as our religion is not our own invention, it having been imparted to us directly by God, consequently its and our preservation are the especial effects of Providence, by which He has proved that all men are safe of obtaining his favour, if they belong to Israel and obey the laws which He himself wrote for their instruction. But it having already been said, that we were appointed a kingdom of priests, that is to say, ordained servants of the Most High for the good of others: it farther follows, that our working and suffering are destined to have a saving influence upon the other portions of the human family, in order to lead them ultimately to the acknowledgment of the truth which is now in Israel.

It has on a former occasion been maintained, that

we have no right to inquire why so great a diversity in belief is suffered to exist, and why error of every sort is permitted to have its rule on earth; for we cannot fathom the counsels of the exalted Creator, nor measure his ways by our appreciation of things. Enough for us that a road has been pointed out, on which we are to travel onward; enough that we have abundant evidence of being possessed of the truth ourselves; and let us leave it to Him to effect his unknown purposes in the manner it may seem best to Him, and the best conducive to our ultimate happiness; and glad should we be, that we are certified that ours is a holy mission, that each, nay the humblest Israelite, for no distinction is made in the announcement, is a priest, bringing by his pious acts sacrifices of redeemed souls on the altar of his God; and we should be proud of the consciousness, that every act performed in faith will contribute to the hopeful resurrection to a holy life of all the descendants of Adam.

With these remarks premised, let us return to the words of our text. I have called your attention to the fact, that the return from Babylon which Zechariah and his contemporaries witnessed was but a partial fulfilment of the good promised to our nation, in fact the prophet himself predicted (xi. 1) the destruction of the temple which was built in his days; and yet he connected with his message not alone the permanence of his people, but the spread of the divine kingdom all over the earth. He, therefore, says: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! for I am coming, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves

unto the Lord on that day, and they shall be unto me for a people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me to thee. And the Lord will again take Judah as his portion on the holy ground, and He will again make choice of Jerusalem." Here we have at once an answer to our question, Why the preservation of Israel was deemed so necessary to the Lord, that He caused them to remain undestroyed amidst all the mutations to which they were subject. The Daughter of Zion was first told to rejoice; under this term is typically indicated the people of Israel, the capital of whose country was the city of David, or Zion; under the name then of a female of this beloved place the entire nation is comprised as the daughter of Zion; she is bidden to sing and be glad; why is this? because victories over enemies are promised? is it because wealth and pleasure are to bring her delight? nothing of this, only because God the Lord is announced as coming, and about to dwell in the midst of the redeemed nation. When we examine the books of Scripture we shall find that nothing else is meant by this expression, than that the people should be faithful to their religious trust, and that thereby the evidence of the divine favour shall be visibly displayed in the land; for sin would procure the execution of all the punishments which the violation of the law demands. The prophecy then is that, at the time of the accomplishment of the good predicted, there shall be a strict conformity to the divine religion cheerfully given by all the people of Abraham, who are bound to execute its precepts as the heirs of this ancient name and lineage; and that in consequence

of this pious course the divine blessing will rest every where, and the more immediate emanations of his glory will be visibly displayed, as they were during the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness and the consecration of the temple by Solomon. But not alone the Hebrews are to be benefitted by this blessing; for other nations too are to come and join themselves unto the Lord; observe well the prediction, "Many nations shall join themselves unto the Lord on that day." How futile, then, are the attempts of kings, of associations and entire communities, to destroy the worship of the Lord, to add to Him beings that do not exist; to ascribe sacred missions to prophets whom He has not sent. Not in this manner could Zechariah imagine, that nations shall join themselves unto the Lord; for he spoke to Israelites, and as one Hebrew could alone address his brothers, in the belief in and the strict practice of all which the prophet Moses had received from on High. In this manner then must the foreign nation also join this worship, as believers and servants under the same religion; and thus they will be chosen among the elect, for they will be likewise taken unto God as a people. Consequently we have here the positive assurance, that not alone shall Israel remain undestroyed during all trials and changes, but they shall at length be what they were originally destined for, "a kingdom of priests," and others besides them shall be brought to worship Him alone, who is Eternal, who is God, who is Creator; and only when they have forsaken their errors will they also be called his people, that is to say, men devoted to his service only, who eschew every error, and will regulate their life by the

law which He has written. Still shall this calling of the gentiles not work the destruction of the ancient chosen race; there shall yet be a distinction between those who always were the Lord's and other men; for to them the especial favour of their God will be especially given, and they are yet to be bound by particular laws, not as a burden upon their conscience, but as a means by which they may be known among the other servants of God who are then to fill the earth. And then adds the prophet, "And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto Thee," that is to say, when a prophecy is first uttered, there can be evidently no distinction, as to its ultimate fulfilment, between it and the random assertion of any common man; it may or may not be accomplished. But when the event, after thousands of years, confirms the truth of those who long since sleep in the dust; if that becomes history which was before a mere improbable revery: then unbelief itself is forced to admit that a Spirit superior to man had inspired the knowledge which during their life flowed from the lips of the honoured dead. In the same spirit then says the prophet in this connexion: At the present moment a mere handful of men are laying the foundations of a house unto the Lord; these newly returned exiles, a small remnant of a once great people, live here solely by the sufferance of their masters, of men who fear not the Lord and seek not the alliance of his servants. But I see a glorious change impending; a glorious end to the mission of the daughter of Zion: her banner shall be planted on firm and holy ground, and nations, now strangers to her hopes and belief, shall come, not urged by the

force of the sword, not lured by wealth, but of their own free accord, and join themselves unto the Lord, strange as the fulfilment may now appear; but when it shall have come to pass, then will all know that it was the Creator himself, who sees through all futurity, who had thus revealed things which are to occur to his servants; and that it was the truth in which the people of Israel believed, in that they placed confidence in their seërs, and remained true to their national God. And consequently, instead of verifying the assertion of our opponents, that the Jews have been cast off from favour on account of their unbelief, the Lord will again openly take them as his portion, just as He did at the time He redeemed them from Egypt, when it was said: "For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." The city also where formerly sacrifices were acceptable, the holy Jerusalem, will again be made choice of as the centre of the then universal worship of the universal Sovereign, whilst on the holy ground of Palestine the now acknowledged favourites of Heaven, favourites only because they have fulfilled their mission, will live in undisturbed security, overshadowed by that protection which the Lord alone can give. To give farther emphasis to his words, the prophet exclaims: "Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for He is awakened from his holy dwelling;" meaning, as the hero arouses himself to deeds of bravery after a refreshing sleep, so in a measure will the Lord, after seemingly abandoning Israel to misfortune, display, in order to relieve them from the evils which have befallen them, his power, his might and truth, against which all the efforts of man are vain; for it is resolved,

and nothing can prevent it, that all vanities shall fade away from the earth, and that through those, who are called the servants and priests of the Lord, tidings of salvation shall be proclaimed to the ends of the earth, at that time for which all saints hope in humble confidence, when the Most High will prove by his mercy who are his, when He will bring near Him those who are holy, when He will be called One by all flesh, as He is in truth the sole God, One in heaven and One on earth, ever praised and holy. Amen.

Kislev 29th. } 5607.
Decem. 18th. }

END OF VOLUME SIXTH.

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